

Prince Rainier leaves hospital

MONTE CARLO, Monaco (AP) — Prince Rainier was released from hospital after a successful recovery from double bypass heart surgery Nov. 25. Prince Rainier, 71, spent two days in the intensive care unit, then where he received visits from his family and ate regular hospital meals. The royal palace denied reports surfacing immediately after the operation suggesting that Prince Rainier, Monaco's sovereign since 1949, would abdicate in favour of his son and heir, Prince Albert.

Leaked memo shows cost of U.K. royal courtiers

LONDON (AP) — As many as 100 courtiers and staff of Britain's royal family are living rent-free in five palaces maintained by the taxpayer for Queen Elizabeth, the Guardian newspaper reported Wednesday. The information was detailed in a confidential memo to members of parliament from Sir John Bourn, parliament's comptroller and auditor general, which the newspaper obtained. It was certain to add to the debate over proposals by the opposition Labour Party to slim down the royal family. The Guardian report says courtiers, some worth millions of pounds, are rented for as little as £39 (\$50) a week to courtiers. It also lists 18 rent-free apartments with eight occupied by minor royals. The report also said the royal family was reviewing plans for its staff. In 1992, the queen acted on criticism about royal wealth by offering to pay income tax and cutting the number of her family members on the state payroll.

Quayle discharged from hospital

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (AP) — Former vice president Dan Quayle was discharged from the hospital Tuesday, saying he expected a full recovery from a blood clot on his lungs and would decide in January whether to run for president in 1996. "I feel good. I will have a full recovery. It's going to take a little time. But all the physicians, all the nurses indicate it's going to be a full recovery," Mr. Quayle said as he left the Indiana University Medical Centre. Quays on both lungs were discovered when Mr. Quayle, 47, was admitted to the hospital a week ago with shortness of breath. Doctors believe the clots formed because of the vice president's long periods of sitting on airplanes. Mr. Quayle, who said he suffers from shortness of breath, said he would be resuming a normal active life in four weeks.

Rental house sold, Fergie must move

LONDON (AP) — The country house that has been home to the Princess of Wales and her two princesses was sold and then is looking for a new place to live. The former Sarah Ferguson rented the 17th-century house in Kent, 12 miles from Windsor Castle, for 20 years. The house was sold last month for about £10 million, after separating from Prince Andrew more than two years ago. She had to move out of the house and find a new place to live. The house was sold last month for about £10 million, after separating from Prince Andrew more than two years ago. She had to move out of the house and find a new place to live.

Dental X-rays can show potential strokes — report

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Patients who undergo dental X-rays may be able to detect early signs of stroke, according to a study by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Dentistry.

Prince Ali graduates from Sandhurst

LONDON (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Friday attended the graduation of the Royal Highness Prince Ali from the British Military Academy Sandhurst after finishing successfully a full year of military course in preparations, training and military sciences. Prince Ali, born Dec. 23, 1975, to King Hussein and late Queen Alia, finished his elementary and secondary education from the Islamic College and the Baccalaureate School in Amman before joining Deirfield Academy in the United States. Prince Ali has participated in many military courses with the Jordanian Armed Forces. The graduation was attended by many members of the Royal family and Jordan's ambassador in Britain.

Volume 19 Number 5789

AMMAN SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1994, RAJAB 7, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

EU leaders ponder future of E. Europe

From Amman Al Safadi in Essen

TWELVE European leaders Friday began a two-day summit that is expected to give "irresistible momentum" to the process of bringing in eastern and central European nations to the 12-member European Union (EU), whose membership will be enlarged next year to include Finland, Sweden and Austria.

But while this process is seen by some European nations as a positive development for the union, others see it as a major nail in the coffin of "dreams" for a federal Europe.

Unlike Finland, Sweden and Austria which will input more wealth and economic opportunities into the union, the East European nations can only increase its economic burden and will make political and defence policy coordination much more difficult, if not impossible, observers say.

European observers and politicians say the enlargement of the EU to eventually include the majority of eastern and central European nations is inevitable. But "Euro-sceptics" insist that such enlargement will render unworkable many European institutions whose performance is already hindered by the conflicting interests and policy differences of present EU members.

Pushing expansion to include central and Eastern Europe are northern members of the EU who see the

stability and economic development of former members of the Eastern bloc as an integral part of their own stability.

But so do southern members of the EU who emphasise the need to strengthen the stability and security of their neighbours in the southern Mediterranean basin.

Observers here expect the EU to focus more at this stage on Eastern Europe, whose countries will eventually join the union, but only after major readjustment processes that will require huge amounts of financial aid from the EU.

But they also say that the EU realises the need to invest in the stability and development of the Mediterranean basin and hence the expectation is that the Essen gathering will endorse a plan for furthering cooperation and economic integration with the region.

The summit, which marks the end of the German presidency of the EU, is expected to approve a proposal for holding a Euro-Mediterranean conference under the Spanish presidency of the union in the second half of 1995.

In a paper presented by the European Commission to the summit as the basis of European policy towards the Mediterranean, the European Commission said the objective of Europe's policy towards the region should be a "Euro-Mediterranean partnership" that will culminate in the establishment of what

would be the largest free trade area in the world.

The paper also states that the EU will have to offer economic and financial aid to countries which will move in that direction in order to offset the negative impact the economic structural readjustment required by the process will have on their economies.

But no decision was expected on a proposal by the commission for a long term 5.5 billion ECUs development package for the Mediterranean region, which is defined by the EU to include all the Middle East.

Observers said the most that could emerge from the summit is a broad commitment to the stability of the region without deciding on specific amounts of aid.

The significance of the Essen summit does not stem only from its implications for Eastern Europe but also from the fact that it will be the last summit held under the blue flag with 12 stars as Finland, Sweden and Austria will be around the table next time European leaders meet.

But despite the call by Helmut Kohl, the German leader whose country showed great concern for having the summit succeed by removing contentions issues from the agenda, for sending out an optimistic message, the meeting was marred by the echoes of fighting in Bosnia and the growing lines of unemployed in Europe.

Europe, which admits fail-

(Continued on page 7)

Murad's bloc wins Chamber of Commerce elections

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amman Chamber of Commerce elections on Wednesday yielded surprising results. Despite observers' scepticism that any group could secure a majority on the chamber board, thus diminishing any hope for an increased chamber role in Jordan's economic voice, Al Wafiq, headed by Haidar Murad, nailed down ten seats on the 12-seat board. The remaining seats were won by former Chamber President Mohammed Al Asfour and Ziad Ghailth, both from Mr. Asfour's group, Al Amal.

Mr. Murad managed to recruit 4,135 votes — the largest number in chamber history going to one candidate. He will be accompanied on the board of directors by ten members of his group: Rifa' Al Safi (3,547 votes); Ahmad Muhtaseb (3,371 votes); Youssef Al Suradi (2,676 votes); Yanal Al Boumtani (2,520 votes); Hisham Al Haj Hassan (2,485 votes); and Ismail Tahir (2,456 votes); Ghazi Kassar (2,385 votes) and Suleiman Al Kudah (2,136 votes).

Mr. Asfour and Mr. Ghailth had 2,223 and 2,547 votes respectively.

Chamber laws dictate that the new board vote for a president from among its ranks, which means that although Mr. Murad received the greatest number of votes in the elections, he still has to win a majority within the board.

Traditionally, however, the seat has gone to the person with the greatest number of votes in the board elections, and it is expected that the board will officially vote in Mr. Murad as the Amman Chamber of Commerce president next Monday.

By virtue, he will also assume the chairmanship of the chamber's mother organisation, the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce.

When elections started Wednesday merchants were worried that no group would secure a majority in the

board causing disunity and therefore, little opportunity for the Chamber to play a greater role in the economic decision-making in the Kingdom's new "economic era."

In a phone interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Murad said he was confident that he would be the new chamber president and that in such a capacity he was ready to put the chamber full steam ahead.

"The board wants to change the laws of the chamber to increase the board members to make it correspond with the number of members," he said.

The chamber board was created with 12 seats when Amman's population numbered only 500,000. Now, Amman is 1.5 million people strong and the chamber of commerce members number 26,000. The board members say, cannot possibly address the needs of the entire private sector.

He said that he intends to keep the chamber focused on the advantages that the Kingdom's new role in the region offers to local merchants, and

says, as a board member (and hopefully as president), he intends to see that the chamber becomes one of the main active bodies pushing for proper economic development.

The question, however, is whether or not the chamber will be taking a leading role in normalisation of relations with Israel. "That," Mr. Murad said, "is a question for another day."

In the last four years as deputy president of the board, Mr. Murad supported Mr. Asfour's Al Amal group, but unexpectedly withdrew his support earlier this year. Chamber observers say that his decision was not because of any ideological differences, but because he had decided to seek the presidency himself. He says that he is pleased to see Mr. Asfour and Mr. Ghailth serving on the board for another term, and said group alliances won't matter.

"As of today, we are one board," he said. "We are working together for the benefit of the chamber."

prime minister, was asked to resign because of his harsh attacks on the peace accord with Israel, a highly informed source told the Jordan Times.

His position on the peace accord and subsequent resignation came as a surprise because he is regarded as being very close to the leadership since he has held many key positions in the past including minister of interior and intelligence chief.

"When you are appointed to the Senate you are an advisor to the King... you are one of the King's men," said the source. "Of course he is entitled to his own views but Obeidat went too far with his public criticism of the peace treaty."

Mr. Obeidat, who belongs to a prominent tribe in the north of the country, made a speech in the Senate opposing the treaty ahead of the vote on the accord, Nov. 9. At the time some members of the Obeidat clan, led by



Gas depot ablaze Friday in Sports City area. Successive explosions rocked the night for 15 minutes (photo: Youssef 'Alian)

Israeli-Syrian talks to resume in Washington soon

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and Syria will return to the negotiating table in Washington in the coming weeks at the levels of senior army officers, a newspaper reported Friday.

Official bilateral peace talks led by ambassadors were suspended last Feb. 25 after a Jewish settler murdered 29 Muslims in a Hebron mosque.

But the two countries' ambassadors continued to meet discreetly in Washington and they will resume their talks at the same time as the officers.

However, Haaretz, quoting American sources, said that while Syria wanted the military talks and diplomatic

talks to be held separately Israel would prefer them all to be together.

Security arrangements on the Golan Heights would dominate the meetings, the daily said.

The decision to bring senior army officers together was reached during a visit to Damascus and Jerusalem by U.S. President Bill Clinton on Oct. 26, according to the newspaper.

The United States gives considerable importance to the fact that the Syrians have agreed to debate security arrangements without Israeli giving a prior commitment for a total withdrawal.

(Continued on page 12)

2 policemen killed in Egypt

MINIYA, Egypt (AFP) — Militants shot dead two policemen as they guarded a railway depot on Friday in southern Egypt in the third lethal attack in the past three days, police said.

The two men were sprayed with gunfire in Malawi in Miniya province, 300 kilometres south of Cairo.

One died instantly and the other later in hospital.

On Thursday a policeman guarding a village fire station in Rawda in the region was shot dead, and two others were killed in separate attacks on Wednesday.

A total of 522 people have now been killed since Muslim militants launched a violent campaign in March 1992 to topple the secular government of President Hosni Mubarak.

Malawi has been under a curfew since the end of August in a bid to halt mounting attacks on policemen.

It has become the new hunting ground for the outlawed

Jamaa Islamiyya (Islamic group) after they were hounded out of their previous stronghold in Assiut further to the south by security forces.

Dutch soldier dies in accident

Meanwhile a Dutch soldier from the multinational observer force deployed in Egypt's Sinai peninsula died in a car accident, police said Friday.

The 26-year-old soldier, whose identity was not given, crashed his car on the Nuweiba to Tabaa road in the Gulf of Aqaba, eastern Sinai.

The 2,600-strong force including 1,140 Americans was created in 1981 during Israel's phased withdrawal from the Sinai, following the Jewish state's peace treaty with Egypt two years earlier.

Separate from the United Nations, the force is financed 60 per cent by the United States and 40 per cent by Egypt and Israel.

TCC extends deadline

AMMAN (Petra) — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) Friday decided to extend a deadline issued to delinquent subscribers of its telephone services until the end of the coming week, according to an announcement by TCC Director General Walid Dweik.

Mr. Dweik said because of the weather conditions which prevailed in the Kingdom in the beginning of last week, many subscribers failed to call at TCC offices to pay their dues for September telephone bills.

This prompted the TCC to extend the deadline for one more week starting Saturday, said Mr. Dweik.

He warned that telephone lines of those failing to pay their dues before the expiry of the deadline will be fully disconnected by the TCC,

which has already partially suspended telephone services to defaulters.

Last Saturday, the TCC said that it partially suspended telephone services to 18,000 subscribers within the Greater Amman area for their failure to pay their bills.

Dr. Dweik said delinquent subscribers owe the TCC nearly JD 3 million.

A partial suspension means that the subscriber is able to receive calls, but unable to place calls.

Mr. Dweik said that according to the new telephone system, after a month of full disconnection from the service subscription would be terminated.

He said a large number of subscribers have paid their bills during the first week of partial suspension and urged the rest to follow their suit.

Jordan, EU start 2-day economic talks

AMMAN (Petra) — A European Union (EU) delegation Friday arrived in Amman on a two-day visit during which its members will hold talks with Jordanian officials on relations between the EU and Jordan.

The delegation, which includes Director of the Mediterranean, Near and Middle East at the European Commission's Directorate General for External Economic Relations Eberhard Rhein aims to follow up issues raised by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan at meetings with senior EU officials Nov. 23 in Brussels.

The delegation will open its talks at the Foreign Ministry Saturday, and the two sides will discuss proposals on projects that the EU may finance in the Kingdom.

The meetings will also deal with preparations for the

Amman economic conference to be held during the first half of 1995, the EU conference, and the Mediterranean conference which will be hosted by Spain in the second half of 1996.

The two sides will also discuss arrangements for holding Jordanian-European talks aimed at reaching a new agreement on partnership between Jordan and Europe to replace the old cooperation agreement signed in 1977.

The Cabinet earlier set up a working group to follow up issues that will be discussed with EU officials.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali met with the ambassadors of France and Germany in Amman to discuss proposals on Jordanian-European relations and the EU delegation's visit to Amman (see story page 3).

Jordan, Israel to open embassies tomorrow

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Jordan and Israel will open temporary embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman on Sunday following the October signing of a peace treaty, the foreign ministry announced. Neither country has found a building to house the new representations so they are to rent space in hotels, said ministry spokesman Daniel Shek. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres have failed to agree on who to appoint as ambassador, according to diplomatic sources. As a result, charge d'affaires will run the embassies for the time being. Jordan has named 38-year-old career diplomat Marwan Muasher as ambassador. Israel's charge d'affaires will be Yaacov Rosen, head of the foreign ministry's Jordan department.

Explosions at gas depot rock Sports City

By Rana Hussein and Amy Henderson

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fifteen minutes of explosions rocked the Sports City neighbourhood last night as approximately 1,000 gas cylinders exploded, causing flames to burst 30 metres into the night sky, as residents of the area fled from the scene.

According to Salameh Hammad, minister of interior, the explosions were caused by a mishandling of one of the gas cylinders by workers at a gas storage near the Sports City.

"One of the workers apparently dropped a gas cylinder causing a spark, which is believed to have started the fire," Mr. Hammad told reporters at the scene.

According to the Civil Defence Department (CDD), five people were inside the building when the cylinders started to explode. There were no fatalities, however, but one worker was slightly injured and sent to the King Hussein Medical Centre by a CDD rescue unit.

One eyewitness told the Jordan Times that he saw four men racing from the

(Continued on page 2)

General census starts today

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first national population census since 1979 is scheduled to commence this morning. Eight thousand enumerators will be knocking on doors of all houses in the Kingdom for the next five days counting Jordanians and foreigners alike.

Although census planning has been underway since 1991, it does take on additional importance, some say, because Jordan enters a new era following the recent signing of the peace agreement with Israel.

The Department of Statistics has been campaigning for census awareness for the last two months. In its latest efforts, the department has distributed census reminders at each house, asking adult residents to record the number of people spending the night in each residence on a given evening of the five-day census.

(Continued on page 12)

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Hizbollah vows to fight on after future Israeli withdrawal

By Jacques Lhuillier
Agence France Presse

BAALBECK, Lebanon — Hizbollah guerrillas will continue anti-Israeli attacks even after the Jewish state has withdrawn its forces from south Lebanon, a leader of the Shiite Muslim group warned in an interview with AFP.

"We shall forever reject Israel's existence," said Sheikh Subhi Tufayli in his well-guarded home in the suburbs of Baalbeck, a Hizbollah stronghold in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley.

"I tell you resistance will go on even after Israel's withdrawal."

Hizbollah claimed responsibility for two bomb attacks inside Israel's "security zone" in south Lebanon Thursday that killed nine members of Israel's proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and wounded 10 others.

The Iranian-backed group, which spearheads anti-Israeli attacks in Lebanon, said the bombings were aimed at "punishing" the SLA, "following repeated warnings and appeals to the enemy's agents to repent."

The SLA's 3,000 men are paid, equipped and trained by Israel, which has some 1,000 troops and intelligence agents in the zone.

The latest attacks were the bloodiest against the SLA in nine months.

Ten SLA militiamen were killed and 12 wounded on March 7, in a string of attacks in the occupied zone.

"Our goal is to destroy the

Zionist entity, and in the near future there won't be a single Jew or Zionist left in Palestine," said Sheikh Tufayli, formerly Hizbollah's secretary-general and now its chief representative in the Bekaa Valley.

"Peace will not survive those who have signed it," he said, branding PLO leader Yasser Arafat as a "traitor who will fall soon."

Hizbollah, the "Party of God," condemned the PLO-Israeli autonomy accord which launched Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in May. It also slammed the Oct. 26 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

If Syria signed such a deal it would be making "a big mistake," Sheikh Tufayli warned. He praised the firm stand adopted by Damascus.

"Thanks to Iran's help, we are continuing our economic

and military activities. Without this money, it would be more difficult but we would still keep going."

Sheikh Tufayli said his group was no longer receiving weapons and had to rely on "limited means" for its operations in south Lebanon.

But the situation on the ground was "excellent," he insisted, while declining to say how many fighters Hizbollah could count on.

Referring to a recent pledge by Lebanese President Elias Hrawi that "not a single bullet" would be fired at Israel from Lebanon if the Jewish state withdrew from the occupied zone, Tufayli said: "I guarantee that he won't be able to keep his promise."

He also ruled out handing over weapons to the Lebanese army if Israel withdrew.

U.S., Europe differ on Iran

WASHINGTON (R) — European countries have subordinated their opposition to the spread of weapons to maintaining political relations with Russia and an unwillingness to single out Iran, a senior U.S. official has said.

Under Secretary of State Lynn Davis said Russia and China were still selling sophisticated conventional weapons and nuclear reactors to Iran, which the United States regards as a pariah state supporting international terrorism.

In a speech to the Atlantic Council she took issue with the Europeans over their policy on Iran.

Ms. Davis said the United States had sought Russian agreement to cease all arms sales to Iran in return for U.S. support for its membership of a new group coordinating policy on sensitive exports.

"In contrast, the Europeans have been prepared to admit Russia to the new regime, hoping that its arms sales to Iran will end," Ms. Davis said.

"Maintaining their political relationship with Russia and their reluctance to single out Iran have been given priority over their non-proliferation goals," Ms. Davis said.

Amnesty asks Egypt to reveal fate of Kikhiya

LONDON (R) — Amnesty International urged Egypt on Friday to make public its investigation into the abduction last year of a prominent Libyan lawyer from a Cairo hotel.

The London-based human rights group said Mansur Kikhiya, an outspoken critic of the Libyan government, disappeared from the Al Safir hotel a year ago and had not been seen since.

"We are concerned that the outcome of the investigation into the disappearance of Mansur Kikhiya has still not been made public," Amnesty said in a statement.

"We have already asked

the Egyptian authorities to make public the results of the investigation, as well as asking the Libyan government for information about Mansur Kikhiya's whereabouts, but we have not had any reply from either government," it said.

Amnesty said it feared Mr. Kikhiya, a leading official of the main Libyan opposition group, may have been abducted by agents of the Libyan government.

He was attending a conference in Cairo held by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights when he failed to arrive for an arranged meeting with his brother.

Mr. Kikhiya, who was Libya's foreign minister from 1972-1974 and served as the country's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, was a leading human rights campaigner.

Before his disappearance

the father of two lived in France. "Any act of enforced disappearance is an offence to human dignity. It is condemned as a denial of the purpose of the charter of the United Nations and as a grave and flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms," Amnesty said.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (left) and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin share a Nobel Peace Prize during a ceremony on moment of relaxation prior to their landing in Oslo, Norway, as they sit in the airplane on Friday. Rabin and Peres will be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize during a ceremony on Saturday together with PLO leader Yasser Arafat (AFP photo)

Search for peace continues in Oslo

By Colleen Siegel
Reuters

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

The leaders of Israel and the PLO returned to Oslo, the city where their peace deal was crafted, on Friday to share the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize and strive to find a way to keep their beleaguered 15-month-old accord on course.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told reporters after a short meeting with PLO leader Yasser Arafat on Thursday that the two of them and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would meet in Oslo in hopes of ironing out difficulties.

Bloodshed caused by opponents of the deal which provides Palestinian self-rule in stages has dogged the accord, hammered out in Oslo and signed in Washington on Sept. 13, 1993.

The two worst incidents: on Feb. 25 a Jewish settler shot dead 30 Palestinians at prayer in the West Bank town of Hebron. On Oct. 19 a suicide bomber of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas killed 22 people — 20 of them Israelis — when he blew up a Tel Aviv bus at morning rush hour.

On Oct. 14, the day it was announced that Mr. Arafat, Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres were this year's laureates, Hamas militants killed an Israeli soldier whom they had held for a week.

After a failed Israeli rescue

raid, in which one of the Israeli commandos and three kindappers were also killed, Mr. Rabin said: "I wish I could give up the Nobel Prize to get the two soldiers back."

Some Israeli officials have reservations at expanding self-rule beyond Gaza and Jericho in light of the violence.

Some Israeli ministers this week said Israeli troops should not redeploy away from Palestinian population centres in still-occupied parts of the West Bank prior to Palestinian elections as the accords dictated.

Palestinian officials warned if Israel tried unilaterally to change the Oslo accords the deal would be destroyed.

On Thursday, Mr. Peres and Mr. Arafat said after their meeting they understood one another, Israel's cabinet, ending a debate of three days, reaffirmed its commitment to the Oslo accords.

The accords provide Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, occupied by Israel since it captured them from, respectively, Egypt and Jordan in the 1967 Middle East war.

Gaza and Jericho were to get autonomy first. They did in May. On July 1, Mr. Arafat, long loathed in Israel, returned in triumph to his homeland after 27 years of embattled exile.

Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin emphasised Israeli soldiers

would no longer fight an unwinnable battle against militants and unarmed women and children in Gaza's alleys.

Each stage of the deal, which calls for final status talks no later than May 1996 with a permanent settlement two years after that, must be negotiated — and that has brought delays.

Elections, still without a date, should have been in July.

Yet the accord broke the logjam of the Middle East peace process begun in Madrid in 1991 and including Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, the second by an Arab state after Egypt, on Oct. 26.

Only talks with Syria, and by extension Lebanon where Syria is the main powerbroker, have still to move off the mark.

Israel Television on Thursday screened parts of interviews done separately with Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat by actor Peter Ustinov.

"Not only by wars but by peace we can achieve what we are looking to achieve... for our children," said Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Rabin: "(The) Nobel Prize is nice... but the peace has not yet been achieved in its comprehensive meaning."

On Friday, Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres left Israel and Arafat left Gaza for Oslo. They will be awarded the prize on Saturday.

Arafat to be a father

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AFP) — Suha Arafat, wife of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, is pregnant with the couple's first child, her spokeswoman told AFP Thursday.

"It will be a child of peace," the 31-year-old Palestinian first lady told Israel radio.

Spokeswoman Yola Hadadin said Suha was just one month pregnant.

"She is tired and sleeping now," Ms. Hadadin said.

Mrs. Arafat had cancelled interviews lined up for the day because "she has to rest," ahead of a trip Friday with her husband to Oslo where he is to share the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Her personal gynaecologist, Ahmed Thil, will travel with the couple, a secretary at the physician's office told AFP. Dr. Thil is also a political advisor to Mr. Arafat.

Mrs. Arafat married the PLO chairman in secret on July 17, 1990, but the union was only disclosed in 1992. Before their marriage, Suha worked as economic advisor to Mr. Arafat, who is 65.

Until then, Mr. Arafat had always declared that Palestine was his only love.

Born into a wealthy Christian family in the West Bank town of Ramallah and educated abroad, Suha converted to Islam,

but campaigns against the imposition of the veil.

The couple settled in Gaza last July when Mr. Arafat returned to take charge of the Palestinian Authority after the launch of autonomy in May.

Mr. Arafat has maintained a low profile, appearing in public here only a few times to inaugurate events such as a cleanup campaign and the start of the school year.

But she has pressed for the liberation of Palestinian women, calling for "laws to protect her, training and education."

However, as the good news broke, so did an article in an Israeli newspaper saying Suha is not Mr. Arafat's first wife.

The Haaretz daily quoted PLO officials in Tunis as saying Mr. Arafat was married to Nejjla Yassin, also known as Um Nasser.

Ms. Yassin told the newspaper she met Mr. Arafat back in 1966 and divorced her husband a year later to live with the militant leader for several years.

"I am the only one who really understood him," she claimed. "I knew what upset him, what pleased him, what calmed him. I totally understood him."

She ran his office between 1972 and 1985. "He trusted me and I knew all his secrets," Ms. Yassin said.

Explosions rock Sports City

(Continued from page 1)

building immediately following the initial explosion.

The storage establishment is 13 years old, surrounded only by a few homes. There were approximately 4,000-6,000 cylinders in the building, according to the owner of the gas store.

In an interview with Jordan Television, the owner of the gas store said only two storage rooms of the eight rooms inside were damaged.

A gas cylinder can only explode if it was old, or if it was exposed to heat over 700 degrees Celsius, a CDD official said.

"The only way a gas cylinder would explode is if it was mismanaged," the official added. "Maybe the safety valve of the cylinder was not functioning properly, maybe an employee had

flames near the cylinder."

CDD units had difficulty approaching the scene as the road leading to the gas store was narrow and unpaved, only allowing trucks and rescue units to approach the scene from one direction and only in single file, making entry and exit to the area difficult. However, the CDD managed to have the fires under control in one hour from the time it broke out.

Firefighters braved the possibility of further explosions when they entered the building to check for any remaining pockets of fire.

Although there are few houses in the area of the store, residents said they have made many complaints to the authorities that the store was so close to their residential area.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Pollards
17:30 Un Pour Tous
18:00 Reportage
18:30 Les Intrepides
19:00 News in French
19:15 Grands Galops
19:30 Harry and the Hendersons
20:00 Innovations
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Murder She Wrote
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "God Father"
23:30 Major Dad

PRAYER TIMES

04:50 Fair
06:30 (Sunrise) Dhuhur
14:13 Asr
16:37 Maghreb
17:59 Isha

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St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625236
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be sunny but relatively cold with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 0 / 10
Aqaba 3 / 17
Desert -2 / 12
Jordan Valley 5 / 17

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10, Aqaba 17 Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 682935
Dr. Yousef Rashed 896301
Dr. Jamil Tarif 794710
Dr. Fayez Dabbas 759155
Firas pharmacy 561912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asana pharmacy 637025
Nairatkh pharmacy 623672
Al Solam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRSD:
Dr. Akram Mousani 248795
Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hussein Al Hajj 984344
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 696390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power
Company 636381

HOSPITALS

RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 06-53200
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre, 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 64281/6
Jalal Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Malhus, J. Amman 635140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845945
Al-Musallat Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajireen 771101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Asirdeh 775112/6
Army, Marfa 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)980560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hana Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRSD:
Princess Rana Hospital (02)75555

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:15 Agaba (RJ)
09:25 Dhahran (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
10:50 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:00 Cairo (RJ)
17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)

17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:20 Vienna (OS)
15:45 Rome, Larnaca (AZ)
18:15 Dubai (EK)
19:00 Sanaa (Y)
19:05 Larnaca (CY)
20:20 Beirut (ME)
21:05 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
22:45 London (BA)
23:05 Athens (OA)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:25 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:30 Casablanca, Madrid (RJ)
11:40 Geneva, Paris (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
19:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:05 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Beirut (ME)
13:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
20:00 Sanaa (Y)
22:00 Larnaca (CY)
23:30 Cairo (MS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700 / 500
Banana 680
Banana (Mukannas) 530
Cabbage 180 / 100
Carrot 320 / 200
Cauliflower 350 / 200
Chickpeas 300 / 200
Cucumbers (large) 250 / 150
Cucumbers (small) 500 / 350
Eggplant 280 / 180
Garlic 550 / 400
Grape Fruit 280 / 180
Lemon 330 / 220
Marrow (large) 200 / 80
Marrow (small) 450 / 30
Onion (green) 360 / 260
Onion (dry) 420 / 300
Orange 600 / 400
Pepper (hot) 440 / 300
Pepper (sweet) 340 / 240
Potato 340 / 240
Radish 250 / 150
Spinach 300 / 200
Tomato 500 / 300

be a father

but campaigns against the imposition of the veil. The couple settled in Gaza last July when Mr. Arafat returned to take charge of the Palestinian Authority after the launch of autonomy in May.

Mr. Arafat has maintained a low profile, appearing in public for only a few times to inaugurate events such as a cleanup campaign and the start of the school year.

That she has pressed for the liberation of Palestinian women, calling for "laws to protect their training and education."

However, as the good news broke, so did an article in an Israeli newspaper saying Arafat is not Mr. Arafat's first wife.

The Haaretz daily quoted PLO officials in Tunis as saying Mr. Arafat was married to Umm Yassin, also known as Umm Nasser.

Ms. Yassin told the newspaper she met Mr. Arafat back in 1968 and divorced her husband a year later to live with the militant leader for several years.

"I am the only one who really understood him," she claimed. "I knew what upset him, what pleased him and what calmed him. I totally understood him."

She ran his office between 1972 and 1985. "He trusted me and I knew all his secrets," Ms. Yassin said.

ions rock ts City

from page 11

flames near the cylinder. (UD) units had difficulty approaching the scene as the road leading to the gas station was narrow and unpaved, only allowing trucks and rescue units to approach the scene from one direction and only in single file, making any and exit to the area difficult. However, the CDD managed to have the fire under control in one hour from the time it broke out.

Firefighters braved the possibility of further explosions when they entered the building to check for any remaining pockets of fire.

Although there are no houses in the area of the gas station, residents said they have made many complaints to the authorities that the area was so close to their residential area.

King, Queen to attend graduation of Prince Ali from Sandhurst

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor left for the United Kingdom Thursday evening to attend the graduation ceremony of His Royal Highness Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein from Sandhurst military college.

Following the visit to Britain, King Hussein will travel to Morocco to take part in the Islamic summit conference at Casablanca where he will deliver Jordan's address to the meeting.

Referring to the general population census which starts today, the King urged all Jordanians to cooperate with the Department of Statistics in order to obtain accurate information for the sound planning of future socio-economic programmes.

Replying to a question about the Islamic summit in Morocco, which opens Saturday, the King said he hoped the deliberations would enable the Islamic nation to attain its aspirations and overcome the difficulties it is currently facing.

Referring to inter-Arab relations, he said he hoped that the coming days would open the way for Arab leaders to meet and re-establish solidarity among their countries.

On the just-concluded visit to Jordan by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, King Hussein expressed hope that it would help contribute towards advancing Jordanian-Dutch ties.

Noting that the Netherlands fully understands the Jordanian position, the King said that the Hague has stood by Jordan in its darkest days and Jordan truly appreciated this stand.

Their Royal Highnesses Prince Mohammad, Crown

Prince Hassan, Princess Taghreed, Princess Sarvath, Princess Basma and other members of the Royal family bade farewell to the King and the Queen at the airport.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Cabinet members and other officials.

Crown Prince Hassan was sworn in as Regent before the King's departure.

King Hussein and Queen Noor are accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Princess Rania, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, Princess Othida, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker and Khaled Karaki, the King's advisor.

A Royal decree was issued appointing Mr. Rawabdeh as acting prime minister during the absence of Dr. Majali.

reliance, the statement said.

During a tour of the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, the statement said, Queen Noor briefed the royal guests on traditional handicrafts produced by women and communities benefiting from NHF's various training and income generating projects.

Also during the visit, students from NHF's National Music Conservatory (NMC) played the Dutch and Jordanian national anthems and performed pieces of classical Arabic music, it said.

The Dutch government, through the Small Projects Fund, has supported a rug weaving project in the south of Jordan, which won this year's first prize at the International Carpet and Rug Market exhibition in Atlanta, Georgia, in the U.S. for the quality and design of its products, the statement said.

According to the statement, Queen Beatrix commended the marketing strategy promoted by the NHF and praised the high quality of production.

Queen Noor, Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus were accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Samaya Bint Al Hassan and her husband Nasser Judeh. Adviser to Queen Noor, Inam Mufti, received the royal guests and the accompanying delegation.

Queen welcomes royal visitors to NHF

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Beatrix and Her Royal Highness Prince Claus, who ended their visit to Jordan Thursday, earlier the same day were welcomed to the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) by Her Majesty Queen Noor and members of the NHF Executive Committee and Board of Trustees, according to a Royal Court statement.

Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus and members of their delegation viewed a documentary film outlining NHF's philosophy and innovative grassroots development projects based on an integrated socio-economic strategy and geared towards income generation and self-

reliance, the statement said.

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Women from various sectors of the Irbid community Thursday attend a workshop on water conservation (photo by M. Sabra)

Water conservation workshop has impact on women attendees

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

IRBID — Although domestic use accounts for only 20 per cent of Jordan's total water consumption, water conservation in the home is important and women play a crucial role in it, the 30 participants of a two-day workshop on water conservation for women concluded Thursday in Irbid.

The workshop, held at the General Federation of Jordanian Women branch office in Irbid, is part of a water awareness campaign carried out by the Jordan Environment Society (JES) in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

It was attended by mixed backgrounds: university students, housewives, teachers, representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In the future, the 30 women are expected to train other women on water conservation in their respective fields of work.

After lectures on the critical water situation in Jordan and an introduction to campaigning techniques, working groups were formed, which finally came up with a variety of suggestions to optimise the use of water in households.

The women demanded to encourage water harvesting in households, for instance by equipping kitchens with simple separate water sewage systems for polluted and less polluted wastewater.

Water used to wash hands, fruits or vegetables for instance in most cases could be reused for washing laundry or irrigating the domestic garden, the women suggested.

Houses should also be equipped with roof drainage systems, particularly in the north where rainfall is abundant, the women said.

One working group suggested campaigning for a law that would force builders to equip new houses with water-saving devices, which in most cases are "technically simple and less expensive than expected," environment engineer Munir Adgham of the JES said.

He underlined the women's role in saving water.

"In our country, most women are housewives and therefore manage the major part of domestic water resources. And what is even more important, women can teach our children to save water and develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment," Mr. Adgham added.

The lecture on Jordan's water situation presented by Ministry of Water and Irrigation Secretary General Mohammad Bani Hani left an impact on the gathering. Some women said it was the first time they had been directly confronted with Jordan's critical water situation, and a great number of them admitted they had not been aware of how acute the shortage really was.

"I am definitely going to discuss this with my colleagues, and we will participate in the campaign, particularly in view of the International Water Day March 22," said the president of an association of housewives from Irbid.

House finance panel to study draft budget

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament Finance Committee Sunday will start its debate of the draft 1995 fiscal budget which was presented to Parliament by the government Wednesday, according to the committee Chairman Ali Abul Ragheb.

Speaking after a meeting between committee members and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Thursday, Mr. Abul Ragheb said that the panel will, in cooperation with Finance Minister Sami Gammoh, make a detailed study of the revenue and expense items in the budget.

In presenting the JD 1.674 billion draft budget to Parliament, Dr. Majali said it was one of the most ambitious to be presented because people have high expectations in the wake of the signing of the peace treaty with Israel.

Referring to the meeting with the prime minister Thursday, Mr. Abul Ragheb said that different aspects of the draft budget and the government's economic and social plan were discussed.

He said that the draft budget was prepared under special circumstances following the peace treaty with Israel.

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ing the peace treaty with Israel, noting that the committee's view was to include advanced programmes that would reflect the people's aspirations for improved standards of living. Also, he said, the committee hopes that the government will introduce laws to encourage investments and cut down on routine.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said that committee members asked the prime minister at the meeting about the government's achievements on the domestic front during 1994, economic projects, the national housing scheme, government plans to increase investments in the Aqaba and Dead Sea area and plans for promoting the free zones of Jordan and dealing with the chronic questions of poverty and unemployment.

Noting that the committee would be fully cooperating with the government and working as a team with the minister of finance to achieve social justice, Mr. Abul Ragheb said that the prime minister has responded to the committee's queries on the government's financial and economic policies.

EU teams to arrive for talks on financing projects

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Three delegations from the European Union (EU) countries will be visiting Jordan this month and next to discuss with government officials a practical programme for financing Jordanian development projects and a new partnership agreement replacing that of 1977.

The announcement about the visits was made following a meeting here Thursday between Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and German Ambassador Heinrich Reiner and French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet.

Mr. Bajelet told the Jordan Times Friday that the meeting focused on the modernisation of partnership between the EU and Jordan.

One of the proposals floated at the meeting, said Mr. Bajelet, was to hold a seminar in mid-January with the participation of the ambassadors of the EU countries in Amman and all Jordanian government departments concerned with the partnership.

He said the meeting also aimed to coordinate stands between the EU and Jordan on future meetings such as the economic Mideastern summit which will be hosted in Amman in the first half of 1995 and the Mediterranean conference which will be held in Spain in the second half of the year.

He said there was a general reviewed of projects that Europe might help carry out in the region in general, and Jordan in particular, saying no specific project was discussed, but most probably Europe will play an important role in water projects, which the ambassador described as the most important in the region, in addition to cooperation in tourism.

He added that these issues will be discussed in detail in future meetings.

The meeting with the prime minister, said Mr. Bajelet, aimed also to demonstrate the EU's response to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's visit to Brussels and his meeting with senior EU officials.

He said it was imperative at present to update agreements between Jordan and the EU which date back to 1977, especially after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The partnership agreement, he said, aims to give more substance to relations between both parties and "to affirm Europe's wish to be more involved in the peace process and to stress our presence in the region, and in Jordan in particular."

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WHAT'S GOING ON

- CHOIR**
 - ★ Choir at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- LECTURE**
 - ★ Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "Renovation of National Thought" by Dr. Mustafa Al Faqi of Egypt at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.
- POETRY RECITAL**
 - ★ Poetry recital by poet Ghassan Zaghan at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.
- EXHIBITIONS**
 - ★ Exhibition of home furnishings and furniture entitled "Colors and Crafts" at the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development new offices, Al Madina Al Munawara Street.
 - ★ Exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artist at Darat Al Funun.
 - ★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Salman Abbas at Alia Art Gallery.
 - ★ Exhibition of abstract by several artists at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

2 killed on Safout highway

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two people were killed in a road accident early Friday morning on the Safout highway where Thursday 33 people survived another accident.

According to a police official, Friday's accident, which also left one victim in critical condition, was the result of speeding.

The official said the accident occurred when the driver of a taxi lost control of his vehicle and struck a light pole.

All three victims were rushed to Jordan University Hospital. The attending doctor pronounced two of the victims dead on arrival.

He identified the dead as Sa'ed Atta, 23, and Mohammad Samir, 22.

The doctor said the driver of the taxi, Mohammad Abdul Aziz, 22, was in the intensive care unit and was listed in serious condition.

Meanwhile, 22 people had reportedly left hospitals Friday after a road collision on the same highway involving a public bus, a cement truck and another vehicle.

A police official told the Jordan Times that the accident was caused by technical trouble.

"The truck driver lost his brakes down the hill because of an oil leakage," the official said Friday.

He said the truck driver started honking and flashing his lights to warn vehicles, "but apparently the bus driver did not notice him and the truck hit the bus from the back."

He said the impact and the heavy load of the truck caused the bus to overturn onto another vehicle driving on the left side.

"Luckily there was only one driver in the car, and he survived the crash," the official said.

He added that the bus was carrying 30 passengers, but only 20 people were injured.

He said eight of the passengers were taken to King Hussein Medical Centre, four to Al Bashir Hospital and the rest to Jordan University Hospital.

He said all the victims were released from hospital.

ing the peace treaty with Israel, noting that the committee's view was to include advanced programmes that would reflect the people's aspirations for improved standards of living. Also, he said, the committee hopes that the government will introduce laws to encourage investments and cut down on routine.

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Road accident seminars run back-to-back

AMMAN (Petra) — As a two-week seminar on road safety organised by the Traffic Department in cooperation with the Swedish government ended Thursday, another seminar on road accidents and the role of family education in preventing them opened the same day at the Jerusalem Community College.

Traffic Department Director Brigadier Nimer Al Hmoud delivered an address at the conclusion of the first seminar and thanked the

Swedish government for its contribution to the event in which several Swedish experts participated.

The seminar, said Brig. Hmoud, is part of a series of activities and functions organised by the Traffic Department with the aim of reducing road accidents.

Meantime, at the Jerusalem Community College, Public Security Department (PSD) Deputy Director for Traffic Affairs Major General Mnyayad Al Mubaslat, said in an opening address

that the problem of traffic accidents in the Kingdom has become a major problem requiring a comprehensive national effort and the cooperation of all the concerned authorities.

Maj.-Gen. Mubaslat said the PSD has referred to the concerned authorities a new draft traffic law that constitutes a qualitative move and tackles all gaps in the previous law. "We are awaiting its approval after it passes in all the constitutional stages," he said.

Foreign affairs committee looks to OIC summit to unify Islamic nation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee Friday voiced hope that the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit which will be hosted by Morocco this week will constitute a opportune occasion for the Islamic nation to unify its ranks.

In a statement read by Chairman Abdul Karim Kabari, the committee said the current state in the history of the nation requires unifying ranks and mobilising capabilities in order to deal with the new international reality in such a way that

guarantees safeguarding the interests of the nation.

Mr. Kabari said the committee believes that of the most important question to be discussed by the summit is the mending of fences between OIC member states to the minimum possible level that would enable the Islamic nation to deal with developments as one bloc.

Mr. Kabari said the availability of political will by the leaders of the Islamic countries was the sole guarantee of resolving problems and crises in various parts of the Islamic world.

The committee, said Mr. Kabari, calls on the Islamic nation to launch a parliamentary dialogue that would run parallel to the official dialogue since cooperation among the Islamic nation should be based on strategic needs rather than on a temporary basis.

He added that the committee fully supports Jordan's official stand on the various issues listed on the agenda of the summit, namely the Jordanian leadership's calls for Islamic solidarity and its stands on the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem.

JTV, Radio devote air time to children

By Rima Corbawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In accordance with the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) move to promote the International Children's Day Broadcasting (ICDB), Jordan Radio and Television celebrated the event by involving children in yesterday's programming.

This internationally recognised occasion started three years ago when James Grant, executive director of UNICEF, challenged the broadcasting industry to dedicate more attention to children and was supported by members of the International Council of the National Academy of Television Arts and Services.

Since then UNICEF has organised the worldwide observance of ICDB on the second Sunday of Friday of December.

According to UNICEF reports, statistics reveal that in 1993, almost 1,000 television and radio stations in 112 countries participated in International Children's Day of Broadcasting, and more than 70 countries produced programmes especially for the day.

Children were even involved in planning and promoting the day in more than 50 countries, and some level of governmental involvement was witnessed in 16 countries where leaders or heads of states participated.

Due to the power of television and radio in directing public interests, "this day is very important in focusing regard to children's issues so that activities could be inclined towards improvements in these areas," said Sina Bahous, information/communication officer at UNICEF in Amman.

As a "catalyst" for change, "the media can and must learn to

exercise a responsibility commensurate with the great power they hold," wrote Tom Johnson, president of Cable News Network (CNN).

Naturally, this responsibility extends beyond news reporting to include other special entertaining and educational programming, according to UNICEF.

Jordan Television (JTV) directs a substantial share of its programming towards children. However in this particular day's activities, we mean to cultivate public awareness of children's needs and their welfare, which has a great impact on our nation's future," said Zahia Innab, assistant head of programmes at JTV. During this children's event in the past two years, JTV presented some programmes for children, but this year there was a stronger emphasis on the occasion.

Throughout the day, programmes on both JTV channels (the Arabic and foreign) were interspersed by two-minute spots revolving around children's interests, opinions and outlooks on global issues such as the environment, the media, and child development.

Also regularly scheduled programmes included items that underscored children's concerns, presented satellite communication between children from Jordan and Oman and showed children's involvement in community activities such as visiting other children in hospitals.

Moreover, a film on children's adventures, a documentary on the children's programmes presented by JTV in the past 15 years and a report on childhood affairs were also broadcast.

"This coming week's programmes will also include some special documentaries and items for children," said Ms. Innab.

Channel Two's special programme on children's rights, entitled "Raised Voices," also handled worldwide issues on children-related affairs.

"Quality children programmes serve the dual purpose of achieving adult acknowledgement of children's needs and encouraging children's expression so that further development can be maintained," said Rima Azar, director of Channel Two.

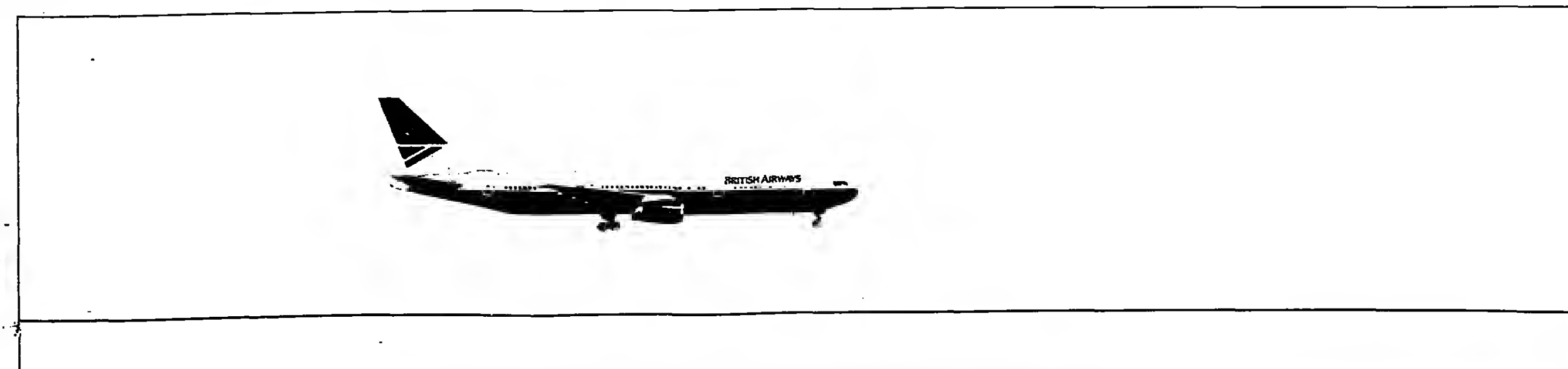
Since attention has been drawn to children's needs, great efforts have been made in child development. According to UNICEF reports, in 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasises all children's right to lead healthy and productive lives.

This convention was ratified by 159 countries on April 26, 1994, and UNICEF hopes for universal ratification by the year 1995.

The outcome of the International Children's Day of Broadcasting has manifested itself in several memorable events such as on Dec. 10, 1993, when Nobel Laureates F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela dedicated their peace prize to children.

Additional programmes to be presented on the foreign channel this week include today's animated programme about children's needs and the considerations involved in ensuring a prospering generation, according to Ms. Azar.

Radio Jordan's participation in this event was concerned with dedicating three of the afternoon hours of the English service to airing conversations involving children from different schools in the country. The Arabic service dedicated the full day's activities to children, providing great opportunity for all to contribute.



Over 310 die in China fire

BEIJING (R) — One of China's deadliest fires engulfed a cinema hall in a remote oil town to the west, killing more than 310 people, most of them children performing and watching a cultural show, officials said Friday.

The Friendship Hall cinema in Karamay, near the border with the former Soviet Union, was packed with nearly 800 people, including 500 schoolchildren, when the fire broke out Thursday evening, an education official told Reuters.

"About 300 people were killed and several are missing," he said by telephone from Karamay, in northwest Xinjiang province. "We do not know the number of injured because they are still counting."

"It was a tragedy," Local television broadcast a brief message of condolence over the tragedy and appealed to residents to keep calm.

Many victims failed to escape the blaze because all but one of the doors were locked and iron bars blocked the windows. Most of the bodies were found piled near

the only exit, one witness said by telephone.

Survivors reported seeing sparks from the ceiling that lit the stage curtains and electrical wires, sending a ball of flames hurtling into the front rows of the auditorium.

One weeping broadcast official said the fire appeared to have been caused by an electrical fault.

Two hospitals alone reported admitting more than 225 injured from the fire, the second disastrous blaze in China in less than two weeks.

An official at the Xinjiang Oil Administration General Hospital said doctors were treating 116 people, of whom 67 were in critical condition. Most were children. Karamay Deputy Mayor Zhao Lanxin was among those badly hurt.

More than 110 people were in the People's Hospital, including 11 in critical condition and not expected to survive, a doctor said.

"The other 100 are only slightly injured but they are children and they are in shock," he said. Some victims were poisoned by noxious fumes from the burning

decor. Officials were having difficulty compiling a final death toll because many grieving parents had taken home the bodies of their children, the Oil Administration Hospital doctor said.

China's worst reported fire of modern times was also in a cinema in northwestern Xinjiang province, killing more than 600 people in 1979.

The cream of students from 10 primary schools and seven secondary schools in Karamay, along with their teachers, were in the newly decorated hall to present a special cultural show to a visiting education inspection team.

"We only have a certain number of schools and they all sent their best students, so in every corner of the town there are families who have lost children," a teacher at the Number Two Secondary School said by telephone.

The fire erupted shortly after 6 p.m., but firefighters, apparently inexperienced and overwhelmed by the extent of the disaster, responded slowly, trying to put out the fire instead of rescuing those

trapped inside, the teacher said.

Troops had to be deployed to bring out those inside, he said.

"Parents rushed to the scene and the situation was very chaotic as everyone struggled to rescue people," the education official said. "Most of the victims were burnt."

Most of the children were from families of workers in local oil fields, which provide employment for 90 per cent of residents in the remote town of 220,000 people, about 300 kilometres northwest of the Xinjiang capital of Urumqi.

The blaze comes just two weeks after a burning newspaper tossed onto a sofa at a birthday party transformed a dance hall in northeastern Liaoning province into an inferno in which 233 young weekend revellers died and 16 were injured.

Narrow exits and high windows prevented the dancers from escaping that fire, and bodies were found in a pile four to five layers deep near the only door.

Namibia president takes early poll lead

WINDHOEK (R) — President Sam Nujoma took an early lead in Namibia's general elections when partial results from the first of 750 polling stations were announced Friday.

Returning officers at Arandis near Swakopmund on the Atlantic coast said Mr. Nujoma, of the ruling SWAPO party, won 3,212 votes against 493 for his only rival in the presidential race, Misake Muyongo, leader of the opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA).

Parliamentary results were not given and final tallies are not expected until early next week, although Mr. Nujoma and SWAPO, in power since 1990 independence from South Africa, are expected to win an outright victory.

Namibians awaiting returns from the first post-independence elections were certain Mr. Nujoma and SWAPO would win but said this time they would have to deliver on campaign promises.

"We gave SWAPO four-and-a-half years to show us they want to improve our lives. Those years and months were enough for them to know what we want. After this win, they must deliver," said Katutura township resident Goliath Masodora.

Many Namibians say Mr. Nujoma and SWAPO could achieve the two-thirds majority which eluded it in 1989 elections.

"SWAPO gave us peace and stability. After this election it must give us jobs, houses and curb the crime rate," said white businessman Maxwell Stopforth.

Despite soaring crime, minimal economic success and 40 per cent unemployment, SWAPO remains popular — particularly among the black majority.

Mr. Nujoma said he and his party were aware of the challenges.

"We (have) laid the foundation of democracy by ensuring there is peace and stability. We did our research



Residents continue to flock to the polls Thursday as Namibia enters the second and final day of post-independence

elections. The elections supervised by U.N. envoys are the first since independence from South Africa in 1990 (AFP)

we know what our people's priorities are and we will address those needs accordingly," he told reporters after casting his ballot Wednesday, the first of the two days of voting.

It was business as usual in the sweltering, high-desert capital Windhoek. Hawkers, shopkeepers and businessmen said they were not anxious because SWAPO was assured of victory.

"We expect no surprise. There is no doubt SWAPO is going to increase its 42 seats," said banker Malcolm Freedman.

Some neither knew nor cared that a two-thirds majority would allow SWAPO to rewrite the constitution and to scrap a clause

forbidding Mr. Nujoma from running for a third term. Others said it would be wrong to give the government carte blanche.

"Namibians would be stupid to give SWAPO a two-thirds majority. This country's government will be more corrupt, autocratic and an unchecked one-party state," said Misake Muyongo, leader of the opposition DTA, which holds 21 National Assembly seats.

Nine seats are held by small parties and the formerly Marxist SWAPO occupies 42. The party is dominated by members of the country's biggest ethnic group — the Owambo — who comprise half of the country's 650,000 registered voters.

Cambodian journalist shot dead

PHNOM PENH (R) — A Cambodian journalist working for a Khmer language newspaper has been shot dead in eastern Kompong Cham province, Information Minister Ieng Mouly said Friday.

He said Chan Dary, 28, a reporter for the popular Koh Santepheap (Island of Peace) newspaper was shot

"by unidentified gunmen" Thursday morning.

"I've just learned, this morning that there was a killing. I have asked the Ministry of Interior to follow up and bring me more information. I have no more details," Mr. Mouly told Reuters.

He said that until he had received a report from the Interior Ministry he would be unable to say whether Mr. Dary had been murdered for personal or political reasons.

According to a statement later issued by Mr. Mouly, the shooting occurred in Kompong Cham, about 90 kilometres northeast of Phnom Penh. Mr. Dary was married with two children.

The agents, acting on a tip, swooped down on the Thai trawler Pola shortly before midnight Thursday at a small port in Samut Sakorn province just south of Bangkok, a Customs Department statement said.

The kangaroos found in the hold of the ship were "very tired" but otherwise in good shape, it said, adding that the animals and the birds would be turned over to the Dusit Zoo in Bangkok. The ship captain told officials the kangaroos and birds were obtained in Indonesia and were to be sold to private zoos in Thailand, without passing through normal customs procedures.

Both the kangaroo and the emu, a large nonflying bird, are native to Australia.

Unknown Van Gogh still life to go on show

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — A hitherto unknown painting by the Dutch impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh is to go on show at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam near the end of the year. The canvas is a still life of a bunch of flowers, many of them asters, and experts think it was painted during the autumn of 1886 at the start of the artist's 1886-88 Parisian period. This was when he first began to experiment with impressionist techniques, museum spokeswoman Rianne Norbart said. The painting was bought by a Swiss family from Zurich in a flea market at Reims in northeast France after World War II. It was soon banished to an attic and it was not until a big Van Gogh exhibition in 1990 that the owner realised the importance of the picture. It was authenticated by the museum and restored in Amsterdam where it will be displayed from Thursday through Dec. 31. The identity of the owner is being kept secret, the painting having been submitted to the museum for authentication by Zurich dealer Walter Feilchenfeldt, the only person to know who owns it. "When you own a Van Gogh, you keep it quiet," Mr. Norbart said. The museum says the still life was never varnished and probably never framed. For that reason "the work is of major importance, since very few Van Gogh canvases have reached us in their original, untreated state," it added. The last discovery of an unknown Van Gogh was in 1990 when a couple living in Milwaukee in the United States sold at auction a still life not listed in the official catalogues.

Thai customs rescues baby kangaroos, emus

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai customs agents rescued about 100 baby kangaroos and some 100 exotic birds, most of them emus, that were smuggled into the country on a fishing boat, a government statement said Friday. The agents, acting on a tip, swooped down on the Thai trawler Pola shortly before midnight Thursday at a small port in Samut Sakorn province just south of Bangkok, a Customs Department statement said. The kangaroos found in the hold of the ship were "very tired" but otherwise in good shape, it said, adding that the animals and the birds would be turned over to the Dusit Zoo in Bangkok. The ship captain told officials the kangaroos and birds were obtained in Indonesia and were to be sold to private zoos in Thailand, without passing through normal customs procedures.

Bolshoi performers stage protest

MOSCOW (R) — Dancers at the troubled Bolshoi Theatre went through with a threat to delay a performance of the ballet Giselle by 20 minutes Thursday night in a protest against the leadership of Director Vladimir Kozlov. An unidentified performer addressed the audience from behind the curtain before the scheduled start of the ballet, telling them: "The Russian leadership is not paying attention to our problems." A spokesman said before the event that it would be the first protest of its kind in the Bolshoi's illustrious history. ITAR-TASS news agency said the performers went ahead with their action despite a call by Culture Minister Yevgeny Gerasimov on them not to endanger the reputation of the theatre, whose name has been a byword for excellence in ballet and opera. Ticket prices, heavily subsidised in Soviet days, are beyond the reach of average Russians. Many tickets are only available for dollars through black marketeers or via agencies in top Moscow. The action followed months of unrest among staff over Mr. Kozlov. Late last month staff passed a motion of non-confidence in his leadership, saying he was isolated from the company and incompetent. Standards and morale have fallen at the Bolshoi as leading performers have left for careers abroad since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The row has drawn in Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who has backed Mr. Kozlov in his plans to create a public board to oversee the theatre and to introduce a new system of payment by contract.



A group of Cuban refugees board a plane as they leave a refugee camp in Panama. Some of the refugees will be joining relatives in Spain

1,000 Cubans flee Panama camp; 196 U.S. troops hurt in protest

PANAMA CITY (R) — Almost 200 U.S. soldiers were injured, some seriously, during violent protests by 1,000 Cuban refugees who escaped from a Panamanian camp, U.S. military officials said Thursday.

One hundred and ninety-six soldiers were hurt when they tried to quell a revolt by the stone-throwing Cubans, officials said. At least 17 refugees were injured in the melee, a U.S. embassy spokesman said.

Most of the injured soldiers suffered cuts and bruises, although some suffered "injuries that are much more serious," according to a military official. The official said none of the injuries were life-threatening.

Lieutenant John Thomas, a U.S. military spokesman, said late Thursday that the situation at the camps appeared calm.

Lt. Thomas said that of the injured Americans, 16 required hospitalisation and 12 Cubans were hospitalised.

"None of these are medically classified as serious injuries," he said.

Panamanian Television showed images of bloodied soldiers being taken in ambulances to a local U.S. hospital, some appeared to have broken arms.

American soldiers and Panamanian police captured most of the escaped Cubans in the jungle surrounding the Panama Canal near four camps where the United States holds almost 9,000 Cuban refugees, officials said.

"Most, if not all, of the escaped Cubans are back at the camps," Liliana Levy-Dutram, spokeswoman for the U.S. refugee operation in Panama, told Reuters.

But as the Cubans were being returned to the camp, another protest flared at a second camp Thursday afternoon, Colonel Melanie Reeder, a U.S. military spokeswoman, told reporters.

U.S. soldiers were authorised to use teargas to disperse Cuban protesters if necessary, Col. Reeder said, but she added that she did not know if teargas was used.

The crisis began Wednesday when Cuban protests left some 40 more American soldiers slightly injured. The Cubans also damaged 12 military vehicles and tore down part of a fence surrounding one of the camps.

The Cubans, who were transferred to Panama after they were picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard this summer, have protested the slow

pace of transfers from the camps to the United States and other countries.

"This is a very serious demonstration... the seriousness of this clearly indicates the frustration these people have with the uncertainty over their future. It is very concerning to me," General James Wilson, commander of the U.S. refugee operation in Panama, told reporters early Thursday in discussing the Wednesday demonstration.

Some 145 Cubans were detained on Thursday by U.S. soldiers and held in custody, officials said.

U.S. troops and Panamanian police set up roadblocks across the sparsely-populated area to apprehend any Cubans still at large from the camps, U.S. officials said.

The unrest began hours before some 129 Cubans were granted asylum and flown to the United States and Spain.

Lt. Wilson said he ordered stepped-up security at each of the camps and said U.S. officials began checking the refugees to see who would qualify for asylum in the United States.

"We hope the (transfers to Spain and to the United States) will provide the other refugees with a sense of hope," Lt. Wilson said.

Thai elections expected as coalition collapses

BANGKOK (AFP) — Chuan Leekpai's hopes of becoming the first civilian to complete a four-year term as Thai prime minister were shattered when his coalition collapsed, making snap elections a virtual certainty.

A dejected Chuan said Friday that remaining government leaders would "make do with whatever we have left and stay true to the democratic path."

Mr. Chuan indicated he would remain at the head of a minority government for the time being to ensure passage of several key items of legislation. But he acknowledged that the crumbling coalition could not last long.

Elected in September of 1992 to replace a military government brought down by bloody pro-democracy demonstrations, Mr. Chuan is likely to be forced to dissolve parliament within weeks and call new elections to avoid a censure debate.

"The consensus is that dissolution will come sooner rather than later," a Western diplomat with lengthy service in Thailand said Friday.

The collapse was triggered when the New Aspiration Party (NAP) defected Thursday after opposing constitutional amendments that would have curtailed the privileges of local officials and the Interior Ministry, headed by NAP leader Chaowalit Yongchaiyudh.

The military-dominated Senate accelerated the breakdown by joining the opposition in the House in a successful call for a special session of parliament after the body's normal close on Dec. 19.

The special session would rob Chuan of six months' breathing space between normal sessions of parliament and almost certainly confront his government with a no-confidence debate.

New governor takes office in Mexican state, faces rebel threat

TUXTLA GUTIERREZ, Mexico (R) — The new governor of Mexico's crisis-ridden state of Chiapas, Eduardo Robledo, took office Thursday amid street protests and warnings from peasant guerrillas that they will renew their military attacks.

Mr. Robledo, of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was sworn in at a ceremony attended by President Ernesto Zedillo in the state capital surrounded by tight security.

But leftist indigenous and peasant groups shortly afterwards declared opposition leader Amado Avendaño their "legitimate" governor and pledged to launch a campaign of civil disobedience while setting up a parallel government.

Mr. Robledo's main challenge as he takes on one of the toughest jobs in Mexico will come from peasant rebels of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) who this week vowed to end an 11-month-old ceasefire once Mr. Robledo took office.

Surrounded by army units, the Zapatistas' military capacity is limited but guerrilla chief Subcomandante Marcos implied his troops would push for rebellion in towns and villages lying outside the large area of mountain and jungle territory currently under their formal control.

Officials in the Chiapas towns of Ocosingo, scene of the heaviest fighting in the bloody Zapatista uprising in January, and Comitán told Reuters that their streets

were quiet on Thursday. The rebels seized Ocosingo in New Year's Day raids, but retreated under heavy army attack to the jungle strongholds where they have continued their campaign for indigenous rights.

Responding to the Zapatista threat, Mr. Zedillo said in a speech after Mr. Robledo's inauguration that government troops would hold their fire. "I have sent precise orders that the Mexican army maintains the ceasefire."

Political opponents claim Mr. Robledo stole Sunday elections through fraud and had threatened massive demonstrations to block him from taking office but his inauguration went smoothly as troops patrolled the streets of Chiapas' capital.

Plot to kill Maldives leader found in spy suspect's

TRIVANDRUM, India (R) — A diary kept by a Maldivian woman charged with spying on India's space programme described a plot to kill Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom with a human bomb, a police officer said Friday.

T.V. Madhusoodanan, director-general of police in southern Kerala state, told Reuters the diary belonged to Mariam Rasheeda, who was arrested in mid-October on suspicion she had bought space secrets with sex and money.

Another Maldivian woman, two Indian rocket scientists and two businessmen have also been arrested in the sex, money and secrets scandal, India's biggest spy case.

Mr. Madhusoodanan said the plot described in the diary involved a woman named Seetha in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

He said Rasheeda told police Seetha was to strap a

bomb to her body and jump before a car carrying the Maldivian leader.

Under interrogation, Rasheeda said she belonged to the National Security Force in the Maldives and was sent to India to enquire into the plot to kill Mr. Gayoom, which she said was hatched by presidential rival Ilias Ibrahim.

"The government of Maldives has nothing to say about what is allegedly written in Mariam Rasheeda's diary with regard to a plot to kill President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom," a Maldivian government spokesman in Male said.

The spokesman denied that Ms. Rasheeda belonged to the National Security Force in the Maldives.

The diary, written in the official Maldivian language of Dhivegi, were read to crime branch police by a sixth-grade Maldivian schoolboy, Ibrahim, Izhan, who

lives in Trivandrum.

"The notes said that not only our president but also a minister would be assassinated," Izhan told Reuters. "I was frightened on reading it."

The boy said a Maldivian minister was to be assassinated on the Maldives' Independence Day, Nov. 11. "Simultaneously Seetha wearing a belt bomb would jump in front of the car carrying President Gayoom the same day," the boy said.

Izhan said Ms. Rasheeda came to lunch at his parents' house in late October, then departed leaving two bags. "The last we heard was that she had been arrested," he said.

Indian authorities have said Ms. Rasheeda and a second Maldivian woman, Ilias Hassan, were intelligence operatives for an unknown foreign country who obtained vital defence secrets from a scientist at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Nambi Narayanan.

White House considering cuts in federal government

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The White House, anticipating similar moves by Republican lawmakers, is considering drastic cuts in the federal government that could include eliminating some departments. The Washington Post said Friday.

An unnamed senior administration official said the proposals are being drawn up by the National Economic Council and will be submitted to President Bill Clinton early next week.

The options under consideration include eliminating departments such as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Energy, although advisers appear to favour "serious, significant, major restructurings."

The need to reduce the size of the federal government in the face of a dwindling budget has been one of Mr. Clinton's priorities since he took office in January 1993, but the Democrats' loss of both houses of Congress to the Republicans in last month's mid-term election has made the move more urgent.

Opposition legislators have already announced their intention to slash the 1996 federal budget that Mr. Clinton is due to present in Congress in February.

Reacting to what is perceived as shift to the political centre by American voters, the White House has put its budget process under review to produce a "much more audacious response" to the Republican gains, officials said.

The White House has four goals in structuring its budget: streamlining government, consolidating agencies and departments, eliminating functions, personnel and areas of government, and privatising some functions performed by government.

The proposal to jettison HUD has prompted Secretary Henry Cisneros into action to save his department by presenting a set of proposals that call for "dramatic restructuring" that saves money, another administration official said.

After nearly daily meetings this week on the budget, the daily said, Mr. Clinton has

scheduled another one on Monday to debate some of the options.

One department official said several views prevail in the White House on how to go about it.

Meanwhile, the U.S. army said Thursday it will cut 45,000 troops to reach a total of 495,000 by the end of 1996 as it reaches a fighting goal of 10 active duty divisions.

The move is part of a major reduction in U.S. defence spending and troops after the cold war and it will be felt most in six U.S. states and Germany, the army said.

The army has already been slashed from 18 divisions and 770,000 troops in 1989 to 12 divisions and 540,000 troops today after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

U.S. Army Secretary Togo West and General Gordon Sullivan, the army's chief of staff, said Thursday that the service's moves over the next two years will be a major step in preparing the service for the 21st century.

The 10-division army will consist of four light divisions and six heavy divisions, all

stationed at existing locations. Each will have three full fighting brigades as well as support units, a senior army official told reporters.

There are currently 1.6 million personnel in the active U.S. army, navy, air force and Marines, and that total will shrink to 1.4 million by 1999 under the Pentagon's current long-range reduction plan.

The army official told reporters at a Pentagon briefing that 35,000 of the 45,000 troops being cut over the next two years would be in the continental United States.

Another 10,000 will be reduced in Germany, where the army now has a total of about 75,000 troops.

Kansas, Colorado and Texas will be hardest hit by the army cuts over the next two years. Hawaii, Louisiana and Kentucky will also feel some financial impact, the army said.

Unknown Van Gogh still life to go on show

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — A hitherto unknown painting by the Dutch impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh is to go on show at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam until the end of the year. The canvas is a still life of a bunch of flowers, many of them painted during the artist's 1888-89 Parisian period. This was when he began to experiment with impressionist techniques, museum spokeswoman Rutger Nijboer said. The painting was bought by a Swiss family from Zurich in a flea market at Remiremont in northern France after World War II. It was then bought by an art collector and was not until 1980 that the owner realised the importance of the painting. It was authenticated by the museum and restored in Amsterdam where it will be displayed from Thursday through Dec 31. The identity of the owner is being kept secret, the painting having been submitted to the museum for authentication by Zurich dealer Walter Perren, the only person to know who owns it. "When you own a Van Gogh, you keep it quiet," Mr. Nijboer said. The museum says the still life was never framed, but that reason "the work is of major importance, since very few Van Gogh canvases have reached us in their original, untreated state," it added. The last discovery of an unknown Van Gogh was in 1980 when a couple living in Milwaukee in the United States sold at auction a still life not listed in the official catalogue.

Thai customs rescues baby kangaroos, emus

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai customs agents rescued about 100 baby kangaroos and some 100 exotic birds, most of them emus, that were smuggled into the country on a fishing boat. A government statement said today that the agents, acting on a tip-off, seized the cargo on the Thai trawler Pua shortly before midnight Thursday at a small port in Nakhon Phanom province just south of Bangkok. A Customs Department statement said the kangaroos found in the hold of the ship were "very fresh" but otherwise in good shape, it said, adding that the animals are being turned over to the Thai Forest Department. The ship captain said officials the kangaroos and birds were obtained in private from in Thailand, without passing through normal customs procedures. Both the kangaroos and the emus, a large standing bird native to Australia.

Bolshoi performers stage protest

MOSCOW (AP) — Bolshoi Opera House performers staged a protest today against a performance of the ballet "The Nutcracker" by the Russian Ballet Theatre. The Russian Ballet Theatre is the leading company in the world and is based in Moscow. The performers, who are mostly young, staged the protest in the foyer of the Bolshoi Theatre. They held signs and sang songs. The protest was against the management of the theatre, which they said was not taking care of the performers. The management said that the performers were being paid well and that the protest was unnecessary. The protest ended after about an hour.



Opposition picketers and street children damage a pedicab in downtown Dhaka hours before the end of the opposition's two-day general strike across Bangladesh. More than 200 people were injured in clashes nationwide which were mainly between the government and opposition supporters (AFP photo)

Bangladesh opposition rejects Zia's offer

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh's opposition Friday issued a new rejection of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's offer to form an interim government that would oversee the next elections. In a move aimed at ending the country's deepening political crisis, Mrs. Zia proposed that she head a pre-election leadership that would include members of the opposition. The appeal came at the end of a two-day anti-government strike mounted to demand Mrs. Zia's resignation as well as a constitutional amendment that would guarantee a neutral government to supervise elections in Bangladesh. The opposition-led protest left one person dead and nearly 300 more injured in violent clashes nationwide between rival groups and with police. Main opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed claimed that two of her supporters had been killed. "Let us collectively resolve the impasse within the framework of the constitution," Mrs. Zia said in a speech marking the end of the 17th session of parliament Thursday. Mrs. Zia implied her latest proposal on elections scheduled for early 1995 was the best offer the opposition was likely to receive. "We have made the maximum concession, as we believe in democracy and we are ready to implement it, if the opposition agrees," Mrs. Zia said. She said under her proposal, the interim government would include five lawmakers from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the remaining seats would be held by the opposition, with herself remaining the prime minister. Thursday's proposal was similar to that made by the BNP during the aborted Commonwealth-brokered talks with the opposition in November. Mrs. Zia's political opponents also rejected that proposal. In turning down the latest plan, an MP of the opposition Awami League (AL) said "talks can only be held after the government approves a constitutional amendment in line with our demands." Legislators opposed to Mrs. Zia's rule have been boycotting parliament since March and have threatened to resign en masse on Dec. 28 unless the supreme law of the land is changed to provide for the new elections scheme. The government has said that if opposition MPs resign, by-elections would be held or the entire 330-member parliament would be dissolved.

Doubts emerge on Delors presidential bid

PARIS (AFP) — Speculation mounted Friday that European Commission chief Jacques Delors will stay out of next spring's French presidential elections, despite successive opinion polls suggesting he would win. Persistent rumours that the 69-year-old Delors has finally decided not to campaign have put the wind up his Socialist party. Following on its disastrous performance in legislative elections last year, the party now fears that a Delors defection will leave the field wide open for the right. The rumours snowballed in spite of the fact they had no apparent foundation except for the obvious reluctance and hesitations of the potential candidate over the past six months and the suspense Mr. Delors himself has cultivated in recent weeks. One report said Mr. Delors had told German Chancellor Helmut Kohl of his intentions in Budapest during this week's summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), but did not say what it was. Mr. Kohl himself, speaking in Brussels Thursday, said he thought Mr. Delors would announce his decision Sunday, when he is due to be interviewed on French television. Mr. Kohl told journalists: "You will have your answer on Sunday. I think it will be an important media event." In Paris, Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, who retires in May at the end of his second seven-year term, was more pessimistic. Mr. Mitterrand reportedly told visitors recently that Mr. Delors's decision would come "next week." The French head of state added that he believed Mr. Delors did not wish to stand, but reportedly emphasised: "But this does not necessarily mean that Jacques Delors will refuse to declare his candidacy." Among the outgoing European Commission president's aides in Brussels, a majority appeared to believe in a Delors "no", as did former Socialist Interior Minister Pierre Joxe, who is close to the commission chief. Expressing Socialist anguish, former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius said a Delors defection would be "an immense disappointment" for the left who would lose its only electable candidate. Another Socialist former premier, Pierre Mauroy, said that Mr. Delors had gone too far in encouraging the hopes of the left, not to stand. "I see such hope growing that he will be a candidate, and cannot see how he can say 'no' to all those who are hoping," Mr. Mauroy said. For his part, Gaullist leader and presidential candidate Jacques Chirac said in an interview he "felt in his bones" that Mr. Delors would not be candidate "because his wife (Marie) and his daughter (Socialist politician Martine Aubry) are opposed." Doubts about the candidacy came as the sixth opinion poll in two weeks said that Mr. Delors would defeat his conservative challengers. The poll by the Louis Harris Institute for the right-wing economics weekly Valeurs Actuelles said Mr. Delors would be elected in a second round runoff due in May by 53 per cent if pitted against neo-Gaullist Prime Minister Edouard Balladur (47 per cent).

U.N. backs expanded Angola force if truce holds

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council Thursday renewed for two months an 80-member U.N. observer mission in Angola and welcomed plans to boost it to a previously authorised strength of about 500 if a ceasefire holds between the Angolan government and UNITA rebels. In a unanimous resolution, it also looked forward to a report by the end of January from Secretary-General Boutros Ghali with detailed plans for a much larger U.N. force, expected to number about 7,000, to help implement a peace agreement concluded last month by the two sides. The accord, signed in Lusaka, Zambia, on Nov. 20 after year-long negotiations, is designed to end 19 years of civil war between the Angolan government and UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). A previous agreement, concluded in 1991, broke down after UNITA refused to accept defeat in U.N.-monitored elections the following year. This resulted in a resumption of fighting that was caused hundreds of thousands of casualties and widespread devastation, and led to a reduction of the U.N. mission to its present level. The Security Council, in its resolution, renewed until Feb. 8 the mandate of the current U.N. Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), comprising some 80 unarmed military observers, police and paramedics. It also welcomed a decision by Dr. Ghali, conveyed to the Council in a letter, that he intends to boost UNAVEM II's strength to a previously-authorized level of 350 military observers, 126 police and 14 military medical personnel, plus support staff. The secretary-general's U.N. special representative for Angola, Alphonse Blondin beye of Mali, told a news conference at the United Nations there had been no substantive breach of the ceasefire under last month's peace accord, despite some sporadic violations. He urged the deployment of additional U.N. observers, saying they would help consolidate the ceasefire. Angolan Foreign Minister Venancio De Moura, who addressed the Security Council before the vote, urged the establishment of "an adequate U.N. mechanism in Angola," a force to be called UNAVEM III, capable of strictly monitoring the ceasefire and the withdrawal, disarmament and demobilisation of UNITA's troops.

Bosnian Serbs release more U.N. troops in softer stance

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. peacekeepers said Friday Bosnian Serbs had freed more of their detained soldiers in an apparent softening of their stance towards the international community seeking an end to the 32-month civil war. But the Serbs also showed their defiance of the U.N. and NATO by launching three missiles into the north-west Muslim enclave of Bihać Thursday night, although there were no reports of casualties. A spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Colonel Jan-Dirk Merveldt, said the Serbs had released 27 U.N. military observers and 40 French soldiers around Serb-held parts of Sarajevo. On Thursday, they released 55 Canadian peacekeepers held at Ilijas, near Sarajevo, leaving some 200 U.N. troops still detained of the 500 who were seized following NATO air raids on Serb targets last month. Rebel Serbs in Croatia, allies of their ethnic kin in Bosnia, also allowed the U.N. to send its first aid convoy to the Muslim enclave of Bihać in north-west Bosnia for two months, and another to resupply its hard-pressed garrison. The signs of a softening towards the U.N. mission, after weeks of harassment and humiliation of the peacekeepers by the Serbs, followed the weekend announcement by their leader Radovan Karadzic that he was prepared to reopen talks with a five-nation "contact group" on a peace plan rejected in the summer. The U.N. said Thursday that Serb missile batteries now covered at least 40 per cent of Bosnia, posing a direct challenge to NATO planes policing a "no-fly" zone over the former Yugoslav republic and providing close support for U.N. troops. The deterioration of the situation in Bosnia in recent weeks has prompted several Western governments to consider pulling out the 23,000 U.N. troops, who have been used primarily to monitor demarcation lines and escort aid convoys to civilians wholly dependent on outside help for survival. NATO, which was asked earlier this week to draw up contingency plans for a withdrawal, said Friday it was making progress, and confirmed it would lead such an operation. However NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes was quoted Friday as saying he had doubts about the possibility of such a pull-out because of the dangers it posed. Mr. Claes told the Belgian newspaper Le Soir that the pullout would be complicated and dangerous and could require sending in large numbers of heavily-armed troops to get them out. "I wonder therefore if a withdrawal is the right solution," he was quoted as saying. U.S. President Bill Clinton offered Thursday to provide thousands of combat troops to assist in any withdrawal, but senior U.S. government officials said they did not want the U.N. to leave Bosnia and did not believe such a move was imminent. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic also endorsed the United Nations mission and its humanitarian role in talks in Belgrade Thursday with U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi. "It is absolutely necessary that all factors in this region assist and support the U.N. mission," Mr. Milosevic said in a statement after the talks. Mr. Akashi also met leaders of rebel Serbs in Croatia, who control access to Bihać and blocked the latest convoys to the enclave for several hours Thursday, and they promised free passage of U.N. convoys through their territory. The release of the Canadian peacekeepers was welcomed Friday by UNPROFOR spokesman Thant Myint-U, but he noted that the U.N. still faced restrictions on its movements around the country and called for these to be lifted. He urged the Serbs in particular, to allow regular access to besieged Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia under U.N. protection, and to guarantee the safety of flights in and out of Sarajevo. The U.N., which controls the airport, was forced to suspend its aid airlift which keeps alive the capital's 350,000 inhabitants after the Serbs threatened retaliation for last month's NATO air strikes. Meanwhile, British Major General Rupert Smith will replace his fellow-countryman Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose as commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia when Gen. Rose's one-year term ends on Jan. 24, an officer at UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb confirmed Friday. An official announcement is expected within the next few days, according to the officer who requested anonymity. The New York Times reported earlier Friday that Gen. Smith would succeed Gen. Rose. Gen. Smith, 51, will head a force of 24,000 men and will take over at a time when France and Britain, the two principal contributors to the U.N. military presence, appear seriously to be contemplating withdrawing their troops.

Rao party begins well as Indian states tally votes

NEW DELHI (R) — Four Indian states started counting votes Friday from recent assembly polls and initial results showed Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party with a slight advantage. The elections in the southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are crucial for Mr. Rao's leadership within the fractious Congress. The small states of Goa and Sikkim also voted for their state assemblies. All four states were ruled by Mr. Rao's Congress. Early results from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh showed Congress Party chief ministers leading with comfortable majorities, but it was still too early to say whether that advantage would stay with Mr. Rao's party. More than 60 per cent of the 75 million-strong electorate in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Sikkim states cast their votes in polls staggered over two weeks to allow heavy security forces to fan out. Vote counting began at 0230 GMT. The final results to be declared over the weekend. Politicians have said Mr. Rao's authority could suffer if, as many predict, his Congress Party is dealt a setback in the two biggest states, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. "The state polls will be a major pointer to the next important national agenda, the general elections," said Somnath Chatterjee, leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the lower house. General elections are set for 1995. The government denied a front-page report in a leading newspaper Friday that Mr. Rao may be suffering from lung and heart problems and had been advised to restrict his schedule.

Chissano: Peace to stay in Mozambique

MAPUTO (R) — Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's president since 1986, was sworn in for a new five-year term Friday with a pledge that peace would last in the war-weary southern African country. "This spectre of war has been removed. Peace has come to stay," he told a crowd of thousands in Maputo's Independence Square, among them his former civil war rival Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the main opposition RENAMO party. He also made a plea for reconciliation. "This is a time for us to continue healing all our wounds and overcome distrust. We must know how to begin a new relationship, without preconceptions and without rancour. We must bury forever our hatreds and renounce vindictiveness one and for all," he said. At Thursday's formal opening of parliament Mr. Chissano said the 16-year war between his ruling FRELIMO party and the former rebel RENAMO was over and now was the time for fruitful dialogue. Mr. Chissano won the October presidential poll with 53 per cent of the 5.4 million votes cast, against Mr. Dhlakama's 34 per cent.

Murayama rules out early elections

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama Friday ruled out "for the time being" an early general election or cabinet reshuffle, saying Japan needed a period of stability to tackle pressing domestic and foreign issues. In a state-of-the-nation style news conference at the end of the 1994 parliamentary session, Mr. Murayama said his goals for next year were to draft an austerity budget and streamline Japan's bloated bureaucracy. "For the time being, I have no plans to dissolve parliament or reshuffle the cabinet," he said on the last day of the current 66-day session of parliament. Mr. Murayama said voters needed time to take in the drastic changes in Japan's political landscape, including the formation this week of the country's newest and largest opposition group, the New Frontier Party (NFP). The NFP, combining nine opposition parties, elected former Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu as its leader Thursday, with powerbroker Ichiro Ozawa as deputy. The party will be formally launched in an inaugural convention Saturday. It will be the second largest party in parliament behind the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), part of Socialist Prime Minister Murayama's coalition government. "We cannot afford a political vacuum at a time of mounting domestic and foreign issues," Mr. Murayama said in ruling out early elections or government changes. He did not elaborate on the foreign issues facing his government. Elections need not be called until 1997 but most political analysts believe polls could be held as early as next year. Mr. Murayama urged fellow Socialists not to split the party in favour of a new "pacifist, liberal" party, as some of them have suggested. "The important thing is that the entire Socialist Party moves towards such a political force," he said. "Faction-based moves are not the way to do it and most of the party is basically in agreement over this." Rightwingers have threatened to quit the Socialist Party to form a new third political force in the face of a slowly emerging two-party system of rival conservative parties. Mr. Murayama paid tribute to his coalition partners, the LDP and the small Sakigake Party, for their help in getting four major bills passed during the session. They include the GATT world trade treaty, political reforms, a tax overhaul and a long-pending plan to compensate victims of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On the next fiscal year's budget beginning in April, Mr. Murayama vowed he would make no exceptions in cutting spending. "We are bound to seek an austerity budget because we are suffering from three years of tax revenue shortfalls. I will drastically seek cuts in all forms of spending." The government bill, to be adopted on Dec. 25, would be sent to parliament when the forum reconvenes in late January. The total 1994/95 state budget totalled 73.08 trillion yen (\$730 billion). In another bid to cut costs, Mr. Murayama promised action on streamlining government bureaucracy, especially the abolition of outdated government-affiliated public corporations. Mr. Murayama said his government would adopt a comprehensive, five-year deregulation plan by the end of March that will aim to reduce government control of distribution and other business activities. The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), a medium-sized party formed 35 years ago, dissolved itself Friday to join the New Frontier Party, an alliance gathering all of Japan's non-Communist opposition groups. Of the party's 26 MPs and senators, 24 DSP members have said they will join the new alliance, while the remaining two have said they will continue in parliament as independents. The New Frontier, which will be inaugurated Saturday, gathers 10 parties and political groups. The DSP was a member of the seven-party governing coalition of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and Tsutomu Hata, which ruled from August 1993 to June this year. It is distinct from the Social Democratic Party headed by the current premier, Tomiichi Murayama, which has joined in a coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Sakigake, also known as the Pioneer Party.

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An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
الصحف اليومية المستقلة العربية المنشورة بالانجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

Peace with Israel — no other choice for the Kingdom

By Dr. Musa Kellani

Link in chain of rights

JORDAN HOSTS today yet another forum on human rights under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. Entitled "Rights and Humanity," and organised by the Institute of Diplomacy and the International Movement of Rights and Humanity, the meeting will serve as a sign of this country's continued commitment to a more responsible and balanced promotion and protection of human rights. Crown Prince Hassan's statement to the participants will help set the tone for the deliberations that are expected to scan the lingering divergent perspectives about human rights across the world. The new High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ayala Lasso, will also address the gathering as a symbol of the international concern about how best to promote those rights worldwide.

The underlying purpose of the conference is to encourage multi-faith and multi-cultural roundtable discussions on human rights in view of the difficulties that some religions and cultures have encountered in meeting their obligations under the various international treaties and conventions. At stake is of course the universality of human rights, a concept the Vienna World Conference made a daring attempt to define and impose on all cultures and religions last year. The Vienna conference's recommendations about the universality of basic human rights remain contested by many countries whose religion or culture is at odds with some of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ensuing covenants that codified these principles into legally binding provisions.

Against this backdrop, today's roundtable conference on rights and humanity would be making yet another determined effort to bridge the existing gap between the current perspectives by promoting a more effective understanding of the differences of views still entertained by Islamic societies on human rights in general. No doubt discrimination on the basis of gender and freedom of religion would highlight the debate in view of the Islamic principled position on some aspects of these issues. The debate on these and other related subjects would therefore enrich the ongoing efforts to promote human rights to the extent that a more enlightened awareness and appreciation of the differences between countries on the issue is realised.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily attributed the deadlock in reaching agreement between Israel and Syria to Israel's adamant stands which are influenced by domestic affairs. Mohammad Kharroub said that the Rabin government is facing stiff resistance on the part of the Likud opposition against any withdrawal from the Golan and is witnessing splits within the ranks of the Labour Party itself over this issue. Furthermore, Mr. Rabin is ruling with a minority in parliament and is in dire need for expanding the base of his coalition and trying to win the favour of the smaller parties and listening to their views some of which oppose the idea of withdrawals from the Golan, said the writer. Kharroub said that Yitzhak Rabin is treading very carefully on this matter lest a blunder or miscalculation could have adverse effects on the outcome of the coming parliamentary elections in Israel. For its part, Damascus is taking time to think matters over and has all the right to pick to its demands for a full withdrawal in exchange for full peace with Israel, said the writer. He said that the Syrians are watching to see whether the Israelis would keep their promises and make real advances towards peace in light of their agreements with Jordan and the Palestinians before committing themselves to peace with the Jewish state.

MOHAMMAD DAOUD, a writer in Al Dustour called on the concerned authorities to refrain from issuing licences for more universities in Jordan. The country abounds with private universities which turn out thousands of people who cannot find employment, said Mohammad Daoud. The writer said that many of the private institutions are operating on a purely commercial basis and are not concentrating their efforts towards promoting higher education but are seeking immediate profits and charging exorbitant fees. The majority of Jordanians cannot afford to pay the very high fees charged by these private universities whose main aim, he charged, is to make profits. The writer said that the Ministry of Higher Education ought to conduct a survey and examine the real situation and the actual needs of various districts of higher educational institutions before allowing investors to carry out university projects. At least, he said, the ministry can wait for several years to study and to examine the situation and the results in the present universities before issuing new licences.

GEOPOLITICAL AND strategic imperatives could not liberate the West Bank and Gaza Strip and setting a state there, would have inevitably led to serious internal problems in the Kingdom, whose population included many Palestinians who always harboured hopes of returning to their homeland.

Having made little headway with new peace initiatives in the early 80s, the U.S. sought to bring new warmth to its relations with Jordan in the 80s by increasing aid to the resource-poor Kingdom. But before the efforts could bear fruit, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 not only brought about a total halt to the American approach to Jordan but also led Washington politically to isolate Jordan, whose refusal to join the U.S.-led military coalition against Iraq was misunderstood as support for the invasion itself.

The Europeans also distanced themselves from Jordan, leaving a serious vacuum in King Hussein's strategy of maintaining alliance with international powers as part of the defensive shield of the Kingdom.

As the international coalition waged war and evicted Iraq from Kuwait in early 1991, and went about systematically to ensure that Iraq would not reemerge as a strong regional power for the foreseeable future, Jordan also found itself deprived of the key regional ally it was counting on.

King Hussein could not turn to Syria's Hafez Al Assad. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd or Egypt's Hosni Mubarak to come, from the Jordanian perspective, the vacant slot, since Jordan's relations with all the three were seriously strained as a result of misreading Jordan's position during the crisis.

Indeed, it was a God-send gift for Jordan when the Bush administration launched a new Arab-Israeli peace initiative in mid-1991. King Hussein was the first Arab leader to join the initiative. The monarch, obviously finding the initiative an opportunity to improve ties with the U.S. and to also influence PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to join the peace process that was eventually launched with an international conference in Madrid, Spain, in October 1991.

Jordan and the PLO attended the Madrid conference as a joint delegation and, along with Syria and Lebanon, launched separate tracks of negotiations with Israel. Little progress was visible in the peace process, although it was clear that Jordan and Israel could have solved their problems and made peace at a much faster pace than all others. But deadlock after deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian track continued to hold back Jordan from getting ahead in its track of negotiations.

However, when the PLO opted to go on its own and negotiate a secret deal with Israel, away from media spotlight and without coordinating with any of its Arab partners, Jordan found itself free from the self-imposed constraints. As such, it signed an agenda with Israel outlining the key points of a peace agreement on Sept. 14, 1991, one day after the PLO and Israel formalised their interim autonomy deal at the White House.

In fact, the Israel-PLO autonomy accord effectively ended Jordan to pursue its own course of action since, for practical and technical purposes, the PLO had taken over the decision-making process of the Palestinians.

Again, Jordan waited until the Palestinians launched autonomy in parts of the occupied territories before moving ahead in its track. In June, one month after the PLO and Israel signed another accord on modalities of Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, Jordan moved their negotiations to the Middle East summit in Washington and in July, King Hussein met with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and issued the Washington declaration, ending the 46-year state of belligerency between them and accelerating the pace of peace.

Subsequently, the two sides worked out the peace treaty, signed it on Oct. 26 and formally exchanged the documents in ratification of the treaty on Nov. 10. In terms of its rights, Jordan gained the return of territory that Israel had occupied since 1948 and 1968 and the acceptance of a fair formula for sharing the water resources of the region. But the Kingdom's diplomatic, political and economic gains are much more significant. The very fact that it was the PLO which took unilateral steps without Arab coordination vindicates and justifies Jordan's decision to make peace with Israel.

For all technical purposes, the PLO, in its capacity as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, took responsibility for its own actions, and Jordan could not be blamed for the consequences of the PLO's decision and actions, according to Jordanian thinking. In other words, if the PLO fails to realise the Palestinian aspiration for independent statehood, then it should be the PLO's leadership that should be held accountable, not Jordan.

By extension, it meant that King Hussein is in a position to tell his Palestinian subjects to turn to PLO chairman Arafat for their political rights on Palestinian land but to behave as Jordanian citizens with all that such status entails as long as they remain on Jordanian land.

On the regional front, the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty effectively ended the political isolation that Jordan faced since the Gulf crisis. The pre-crisis warmth in Jordan's relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait has not been restored yet, but it is only a matter of time now, given the influence that the U.S. wields with the Gulf states. Jordan could now be counted as one of the strong Arab countries in the region.

It was also clear to the rest of the Arab World that Syria was articulating its own terms for peace with Israel and that if the decision had been left to Damascus, Jordan would have found itself under the Syrian political domination of which King Hussein has had ample experience during the mid-70s when Jordanian-Syrian relations were at their peak. No need to lag behind.

Despite all assurances and pledges from Syria about not breaking Arab ranks, Jordan was also fearful that its track of negotiations with Israel would be abandoned if Syria were to accept any of the U.S.-mediated Israeli proposals before the Kingdom managed to address its concerns with Israel.

In such a course of events, the focus would have shifted entirely to the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations and Jordan would have been sidelined until Syria and Israel worked out a peace accord. That would have also meant weakening of the Jordanian bargaining position.

By the same token, Syria's joining the peace bandwagon would have also meant another claimant to the economic benefits of peace, another key consideration behind Jordan's decision to enter the treaty with Israel.

With an economy burdened by a nearly \$7 billion foreign debt and denied any infusion of significant aid, Jordan had few options but to rebuild its bridges with the West. But beyond that, mindful of the generous aid the U.S. gave Egypt and Israel as a reward for their Camp David agreement, the Kingdom also saw a peace accord with Israel as one of the means to address its economic woes.

Besides, there was Jordan's awareness that its geopolitical location in the great land-bridge between Europe and Asia qualified it to play a major role in regional economic if it could offer the right ingredients to attract foreign investment — a key element any move to address unemployment and poverty.

King Hussein and his heir apparent, Crown Prince Hassan, have repeatedly affirmed that peace would not be sustainable unless the man on the street felt an improvement in living standards and the emergence of a new political and economic environment which allows free enterprise and "optimisation" of the human potential for development. An improvement in living standards and addressing the problems of poverty and unemployment are the key factor Jordan sees as the effective to the strong opposition to the peace treaty put by Muslim fundamentalist and leftist parties in the country.

It is true that many of the Palestinian living in Jordan found solace in the rhetoric of the anti-peace groups, particularly the Islamic Action Front, Jordan's strongest Muslim fundamentalist group.

But resignation of accepting the inevitability of peace with Israel rather than pursuing a confrontational approach is the dominant feeling among Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

Recent opinion poll conducted by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan found that 81 per cent of Jordanians supported the peace treaty, but also that the support could wane unless peace was accompanied by economic benefits for the people.

The stage for international aid and foreign investment in Jordan was set at a conference held in Casablanca, Morocco, Oct. 30 - Nov. 1. Amman will host a follow-up conference in mid-1995, when it is hoped that some of the \$18 billion worth of projects that Jordan presented in Casablanca could be advanced in terms of financing needs.

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Fakhri Kaware, a columnist in Shihab, criticised a reported statement by the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Saad Hayat Srour, in which he was reported to have said that the Parliament was losing credibility because of the many interviews Parliament members gave to the press, airing their views about the situation in the country.

It is the right of the deputies to assert their opinions any way they like because they live in democracy, said Kaware. Parliament has already lost part of its freedom by being forced to accept and approve the peace treaty with Israel and the deputies should not be deprived of the right to air their view at least outside Parliament about the general political, economic and social affairs, said the writer.

A writer in Al Ra'i criticised the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) for suspending telephone services to homes of 18,000 subscribers at a time when the Kingdom was affected by a snowstorm when citizens normally need the telephone service for emergencies.

Without the PLO, meaning the realisation of the Palestinian quest to liberate the West Bank and Gaza Strip and setting a state there, would have inevitably led to serious internal problems in the Kingdom, whose population included many Palestinians who always harboured hopes of returning to their homeland.

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It is the right of the deputies to assert their opinions any way they like because they live in democracy, said Kaware. Parliament has already lost part of its freedom by being forced to accept and approve the peace treaty with Israel and the deputies should not be deprived of the right to air their view at least outside Parliament about the general political, economic and social affairs, said the writer.

A writer in Al Ra'i criticised the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) for suspending telephone services to homes of 18,000 subscribers at a time when the Kingdom was affected by a snowstorm when citizens normally need the telephone service for emergencies.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Israel proves intent on perpetuating presence in Arab territories

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL Arabic press gave prominence in the past week to Israel's practices in the occupied Arab lands, the prospects of the peace process and domestic affairs.

Nawaf Zaru, a columnist in Al Dustour, accused Israel of pursuing efforts to consolidate its hold on the occupied Palestinian lands by opening highways to link the Jewish settlements and by taking measures to ensure the safety of their residents whose presence in the Arab lands will, under Israel's plan, continue to defy the Arab rights and feelings.

The writer said that the huge highways under construction are also intended to encircle the Arab towns and population settlements in a carefully planned military plot to continue the process of subjugating the Arab population.

Instead of showing its readiness to withdraw from the occupied lands as provided for in the peace agreements with the Palestinians, the Israelis are intent on perpetuating their presence in Arab territories, said the writer.

Mohammad Subeili, a columnist in Al Dustour, criticised statements by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in which he said Islamic fundamentalism constituted a grave danger to the Middle East peace.

The writer said that Mr. Peres has cited the actions of Islamists in Gaza, Lebanon and Algeria to support

his views and to set the world against the Arab Muslim people.

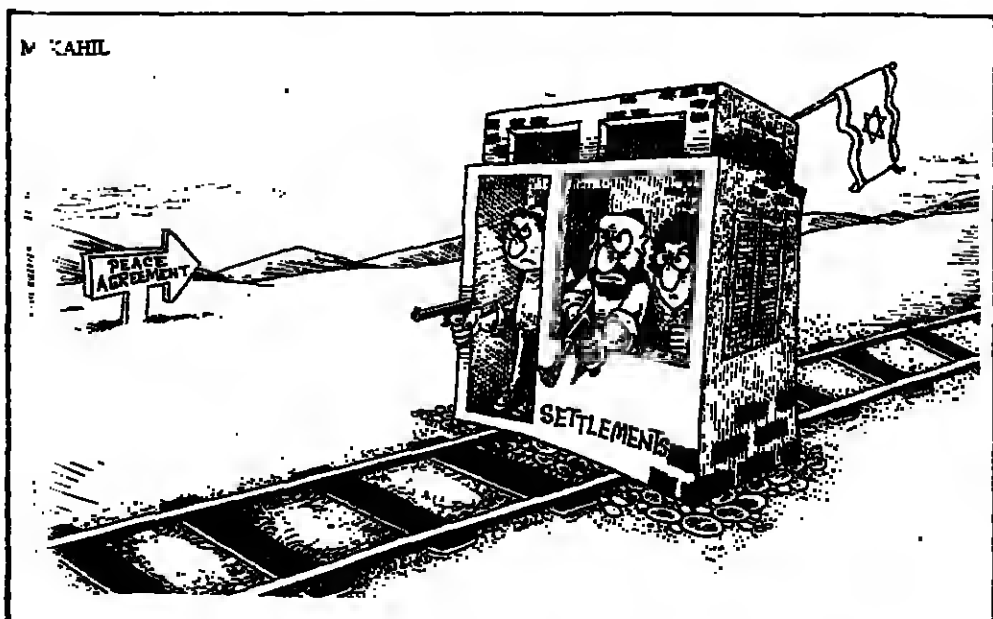
But Mr. Peres has overlooked the actions of Zionist terrorists and Jewish settlers who have been pioneers in acts of terror and who commit atrocities against the Palestinians.

One example of the Jewish settlers' terrorism, the writer, is the massing of scores of Muslim worshippers in Al Ibrah Mosque of Hebron in February.

Hamadeh Faraaneh, a columnist in Al Dostur, wondered how peace could be achieved when, despite the Palestinians-Israeli agreements, thousands of Palestinian youth remain in Israeli jails. How can peace be achieved with any Arab states as long as there are thousands of Arab youth still banned from returning to their homes?

He asked, how can peace be established if word and deed as long as the Israeli authorities maintain mass punishment against the Arab population? asked Faraaneh, who said that Israel is showing no sign of relenting in opening the door for a genuine peaceful era in the Arab population.

Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i, referred to Crown Prince Hassan's recent talks with the European Union leaders, saying that they aimed at ensuring Europe's partnership in the peace-making process and in



financing the reconstruction process in our region. The Israelis counted all the past decades in U.S. financial, economic and military assistance while the Arabs remained in the dark, not acquiring any meaningful help from the Europeans.

Now that Jordan has signed a peace treaty with Israel, the Europeans should promptly react by offering the Kingdom all the help it requires to meet its commitments of the peace era, said the writer. Heh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dostur, said that the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher failed to bridge the gap between Israel and Syria over a settlement and chose to cover up for this failure by blaming the Palestinians

for the lack of what he called real progress in their peace talks with the Israelis.

To cover up for his failure to reach a Syrian-Israeli settlement, Mr. Christopher chose to blame the Palestine National Authority (PNA) for what he claimed was its failure to ensure security for the Israelis and the Jewish settlements, said Qallab.

The writer said the U.S. secretary realises that the PNA was doing all it could to control the security situation and that the Israelis are finding a pretext in resistance activities outside the self-rule areas to perpetuate their presence on Arab land. He added that Mr. Christopher's statements can by no means contribute to any

progress in the aspired peace process.

Referring to the resignation of Deputy Premier Thouqan Hindawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily said it was motivated by the failure on the part of the government to handle the chronic domestic issues in a satisfactory manner.

Sultan Al Hattah said that individual ministers cannot be blamed for the failure but rather the whole team of Cabinet ministers who should have worked in unison to deal with many social and economic ills.

The writer said the resignation now opens the way for a new government reshuffle or a new government to take over.

There is no doubt that Mr. Hindawi's resignation

has opened the door to many rumours and speculations about the government's next moves, said Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dustour.

The writer said that the resignation dealt a hard blow to the government which needs every backing at the moment when Parliament is debating the 1991 budget.

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Saudi Arabia cuts spending by another 20%

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — Saudi Arabia is to reduce its public spending by another 20 per cent next year as it grapples with an economic crisis triggered by a fall in oil revenues and the bill from the Gulf war.

King Fahd, in a speech reported Friday, said: "We cut this year's budget by 20 per cent and we are going to reduce it by another 20 per cent."

The details of the reduction will be contained in the 1995 budget to be published later this month.

The king acknowledged that his country was facing treasury difficulties but blamed it on the bill for financing the 1991 Gulf war estimated at more than \$50 billion, of which a part has still to be paid.

A U.S. military expert based in Riyadh told AFP that "the Saudis are being forced more and more to tighten their belts to stop the collapse of their economy and halt an increasing slump in business."

"A number of the country's sectors are feeling the weight of the economic crisis and hundreds of businesses are complaining of difficulties in payments," he added, refusing to be named.

He warned the difficulties could hit the "Saudi oil and petrochemicals industry and reduce oil revenues which finance more than 80 per cent of the state budget."

Saudi Arabia cut expenditure from around \$52.53 billion in 1993 to \$42.66 billion this year.

The unprecedented cash crisis in the country, the world's biggest oil producer and exporter, has been linked to the fall in crude prices.

It drove the government to cut its 1994 budget by 20 per cent following years of running a deficit, and to privatise some public services.

A banker working in Saudi Arabia said that the government has been "forced to take out bank loans to honour its commitments to several foreign firms."

However, King Fahd sought to contain fears saying "the Saudi economy is not unstable." "Our currency is 100 per cent guaranteed, and our reserves are secure," he stressed.

But he added the economic crisis could last a few more years. "In two or three years we will no longer need anybody, we shall be self-sufficient and we shall have a very solid budget," he said.

The U.S. expert said "the Saudis may be forced in the near future to set up a tax system but it will have a negative effect on the foreign workforce."

The United States, which has major arms and other contracts with Saudi Arabia, recently called on the government to cut spending, drop state subsidies and diversify its industry, in order to contain the deficit.

The foreign debt is about \$70 billion and Riyadh has asked Washington to delay repayments on two major contracts signed in September worth some \$70 billion.

DM/USD rate expected in the 1.50- 1.60 range

Currency Outlook

Overview

Fundamental View: The rapid flattening of the U.S. yield curve and the rise of the dollar in recent weeks suggest increased confidence among investors that the Fed is serious about slowing the economy and will take whatever action needed in coming quarters to slow economic growth to under 2.5 per cent. Following Fed's 75-basis point rate hike in mid-November, we recently changed our forecast towards a neutral view of the dollar against European currencies, the centre of gravity for the DM/USD rate expected to be in the DM/USD 1.50-1.60 range for the next 12 months. A move toward tighter monetary policy in Germany sometime next year is likely to keep the dollar from rallying strongly against the Deutschmark.

We have not changed our forecast for the dollar against the yen, which has typically been far less sensitive to interest rate developments than the European currencies. We continue to expect that the reluctance of Japanese investors to finance the nation's current account surplus will bring further upward pressure on the yen in 1995, and look for yen to trade at JPY/USD 120 in 12 months.

Technical View: The week ended Dec. 2 saw the U.S. dollar index post week-to-week gains for the sixth consecutive time. The index has not put together rally of this length since the summer of 1991. Last week's gain came at the expense of the European currencies and the Japanese yen; the greenback fell against both the Australian and Canadian dollars. Most importantly, the index is challenging 89.00-91.00 resistance and, therefore, the underlying post-February downturn.

With medium momentum still constructive, higher highs appear indicated. However, short term momentum appears overbought and deteriorating. Moreover, sentiment for the dollar, while not excessive, is deteriorating noticeably. This suggests that a pullback (within the rally trend) may be imminent.

We are inclined to raise first support against the 88.00 area on the premise that a break of that level would be a good sign a correction is under way; benchmark support exists at 84.91.

Japanese yen

Fundamental View: The dollar has moved up to the JPY/USD 100 level in recent days, boosted by improved sentiment towards the dollar following the Republican victory in U.S. mid-term elections and the Fed's larger-than-expected 75 basis point rate hike on Nov. 15. A spate of strong U.S. economic reports recently has also given the dollar a boost by implying that still more Fed tightening will be needed next year.

Another potential positive for the dollar is that U.S. capital outflows could begin to slow as U.S. mutual fund investments slow or reverse their purchases of mutual funds and begin to keep their money close to home in the form of CDs.

All of these factors may convince current speculators to borrow yen to buy dollars, which could give the dollar a

further boost in the near term. However, we still think that any potential dollar rally against the yen is likely to be short-lived because of the reluctance of Japanese investors to finance trade deficits of the U.S. and dollar-linked currencies. Net private capital outflows from Japan continue to run far below the nation's current account surplus. So even though the surplus is beginning to contract, downward pressure on the dollar could persist for some time.

Expectations of our economists in Tokyo that the Bank of Japan raise interest rates by 100 basis points over the next year are also a potential negative for the dollar, as are concerns that U.S. politics could turn highly confrontational next year as Republican's revisit Whitewater related investigations. We continue to expect the dollar to trade as low JPY/USD 92 yen over the next 6-to-12 months.

Technical View: The Japanese yen fell 1.9 per cent versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Dec. 2 and was the weakest of the six major currencies we regularly discuss. Sentiment has begun to improve, but is still viewed as neutral. While the currency has only marginally broken down from a trading range that has been in force since July, it has decisively moved below the post-February uptrend channel.

Momentum is still only neutral, but appears have the potential to have a downward bias for perhaps two more months. This would suggest an upcoming penetration of 100-101 Y/U.S.S. support; a move would set the stage for further weakness to 105-107. With the above mind, resistance at 96-97 takes on added significance.

Deutschmark

Fundamental View: The dollar was little changed in the last week, continuing to trade near DM/USD 1.57. It looks increasingly likely that the dollar has bottomed against the mark now that the Fed's inflation fighting credibility appears to have been restored. For most of this year, markets have regarded the Fed as being "behind the curve" on inflation and consequently investors preferred to hold marks rather than dollars. Market participants now seem inclined to believe that the Fed means business in its turn towards a more restrictive monetary policy.

Due to this sea-change in sentiment, we recently revised our outlook for the dollar-mark exchange rate from being negative to the dollar versus the mark to having a neutral stance. An important virus for the dollar is whether or not the massive amounts of capital outflows have left the U.S. in search of higher returns—largely via mutual funds—slow or reverse in the next year as bank deposit rates here in the U.S. rise. If outflows slow, as expected, the dollar should stabilise. If capital outflows actually reverse as Americans try to repatriate their foreign investments, the dollar could conceivably rally further. That said, it should not help the dollar if the Bundesbank begins to tighten monetary policy next year, as we expect. And recent concerns about systemic problems in the U.S. financial system tied to derivatives losses cannot be viewed as a plus for the dollar.

For the time being, we maintain a neutral stance and expect the dollar with a centre of gravity in the DM/USD

1.55-1.60 range over the next 12 months.

Technical View: The Deutschmark declined 1.3 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week and has begun to move below the post-February uptrend channel. Sentiment is improving, and is now near oversold levels. Momentum is moving towards neutral, and still seems to have the potential to remain under pressure well into 1995. These points suggest that a potentially important medium term top is in place.

Although the 1.58 DM/U.S.S. level still has to be monitored, further weakness through 1.595 would lay the groundwork for a move towards 1.68. Benchmark resistance remains at 1.486, but there is now intervening resistance at 1.544-1.547. Against the yen, the D-mark gained 0.6 per cent last week. Medium term oscillators remain under pressure, suggesting a potential test of the lows of the long term trading range. That range generates support at 60, with resistance above 66.50.

Pound sterling

Fundamental View: The British pound rose on news that the Bank of England raised the base lending rate today, up 50 basis points to 6.25 per cent. The pound rose against the mark and the dollar. And increase in rates of this magnitude was widely anticipated to occur sometime in December or January as a preemptive move against inflation. Underlying inflation -retail price inflation less mortgage interest payments- is currently only 2 per cent, the lowest level in 27 years.

However, real GDP rose 4.2 per cent in the third quarter following a 4.1 per cent increase in the second quarter and growth for 1994 should average 3.7 per cent. With very little spare capacity left in the U.K., inflation is likely to begin picking up soon and we expect base rates over the next year to be increased by another 100 basis points to 7.25 per cent.

However, we also expect that the U.S. will continue to tighten monetary policy while Germany is expected to shift to a less accommodative stance by pushing up its key rate by the middle of next year. Based on our neutral outlook for the mark-dollar exchange rate, we expect the pound to trade near USD/GBP 1.58 and DM/GBP 2.45 in 12-month's — not that different from the current level. However, in the interim we think there is scope for pound weakness against both of these currencies.

Technical View: The British pound lost 0.2 per cent versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Dec. 2. Sentiment continues to improve and is neutral. Momentum is reversing to the downside, and the currency has been testing 1.57 U.S.\$/1.59 support. With further weakness still likely in coming weeks, the rally appears complete and suggests a continued decline towards \$1.52-\$1.55. The 1993-1994 base generates support as low as \$1.46. Resistance remains at \$1.643.

Against the DM, sterling gained 1.1 per cent week. Still, there are initial signs of momentum deterioration, and the inability to rally through 2.44-2.48 in coming weeks could suggest an imminent medium term peak support exists at 2.38-2.41.

Japan's service prices much higher than in U.S. and S. Korea

TOKYO (AFP) — Industrial service prices in Japan, such as real estate and transportation, are 1.63 times higher than in the United States and 5.67 times higher than in South Korea, a government report has showed.

Prices of raw materials and other industrial goods were 1.14 times higher in Japan than in the United States, and 1.41 times higher in South Korea, according to the trade and industry minister's monitoring in the six months to September.

Compared with Germany, Japanese service prices were 1.72 times higher and industrial good prices were up 1.03 times.

The price gaps reflect the stronger yen, high labour costs, rigid government regulations and exclusive business practices in Japan. They said the gaps were causing many Japanese

manufacturers to shift production bases abroad, while companies are turning to foreign countries to get service.

The ministry surveyed prices of 91 industrial goods and 17 services.

Prices of oil and coal products were 2.50 times higher in Japan than in the United States and those of gas and electricity were 1.70 times higher.

Some products, however, were cheaper in Japan. Prices were 0.61 times of the U.S. Prices for precision instruments and 0.82 times for chemical products.

In comparison with South Korea, real estate prices were as much as 16.9 per cent higher in Japan.

With Germany, financial and insurance service prices were 2.54 times higher and real estate prices were up 2.97 times.

Nigerian inflation spirals after fuel price hike

LAGOS (R) — A big increase in fuel prices has let loose inflation in Nigeria, economists said.

"Observers are at pains to quantify the level of domestic inflation particularly with the recent adjustment in prices of petroleum products coupled with the enormous deterioration in infrastructure," the Financial Post journal said.

Before the price of petrol was increased to 11 naira a litre in October from 3.25 naira and those of other fuel products such as diesel and kerosene similarly, inflation was officially estimated to be running at under 60 per cent.

The Federal Office of Statistics put inflation in August at 56.3 per cent although independent sources believe it was higher.

"But since the increase in fuel prices everything has gone haywire," a senior official of the department said.

Market surveys by Nigerian newspapers show that prices of many items, includ-

ing food, have doubled.

The surveys showed prices of foodstuffs, soap and detergents, and building materials have risen by between 80 to 100 per cent since the fuel price hike, compounding the plight of millions of already poor Nigerians.

"The situation is just unbearable," housewife Ronke Idowu said. "Many homes will not survive this for long because already there is a lot of quarrelling over house-keeping money," she added.

The price of services, especially transport, has also risen steeply. The surveys showed public transport fares had doubled and a worker commuting to central Lagos from the outskirts now spends about 120 naira (\$5.4) a day.

"Government workers, who are among the poorest paid people in Nigeria, appear worst hit. A junior grade civil servant earns 1,200 naira (\$55) a month, less than half the cost of a 50 kilogramme bag of rice."

Nigeria's military government is negotiating increases in allowances with the unions but so far there is no indication how much cushion these would provide.

Employers, fearing that the government will further raise fuel prices although Oil Minister Don Etebet has denied this.

Economists say apart from the fuel price hike, a steep decline in the value of the naira in the officially banned but a thriving foreign ex-

change black market was also helping stoke inflation.

Nigeria relies heavily on food and raw material imports and official foreign exchange has not been enough to meet demand. Automotives sources have dried up because of the 22 naira to the dollar rate of exchange fixed by Fiat in January.

In the black market, the dollar is exchanging for 90 naira, making the cost of imported items beyond the reach of many.

mission impossible

DAJANI'S Gold & Gems

6th Circle, Amra Hotel Shops, Amman.

BLOODSTONE: For pain and sadness. It is good for ridding maladies without really confronting them.

THE BETTER HALF

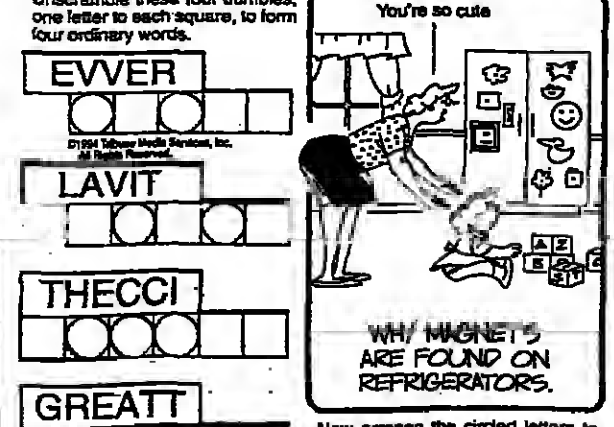
By Glasbergen



"I gave you all my raisins. It's not the most romantic thing I've ever done, but it's not bad for 7:00 AM!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer: THEY'RE

Yesterday's Jumbles: ACUTE BAKED, FORBID, UNSEAT. Answer: What the tired manager of the quaint Inn looked forward to — BED AND BREAKFAST.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1994

By Thomas S. Plerson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Don't entangle yourself in some private worry that distracts you from success in a pending business activity that is moving forward at a rapid pace under today's three positive moon aspects.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have to be tactful at home, but outside associates are very cooperative. Do not trust in the evening on you, and your loved ones could have problems.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) That problem with an associate has to be considered seriously, but get many assignments completed in the interim.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Handle that monetary affairs with tact in the morning. Come to a fine understanding with close friends and associates over some project.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't listen to what a newcomer has dreamed up. Make a plan to gain your finest wishes. State your aims and desires to your mate.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Good friends can bring you real progress on an assignment during the day. Steer clear of a hard-to-handle business deal which could cause you problems.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Avoid a difficult associate who likes to irritate you. Get a higher-up to give you the help you need towards completing a complex assignment.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Handling an out-of-town matter wisely can bring you fine benefits, but don't work yourself into a frenzy. This is a day for expansion.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It is important you handle duties well and forego pleasure for the time being so you can have a real progress. Be kind and thoughtful towards mate.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Avoid an unpleasant discussion at home, and try to improve an outside relationship which is important to your welfare and well being.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Forget that temptation to run off on a trip since you have many obligations to meet at this time and it would be foolish on your part.

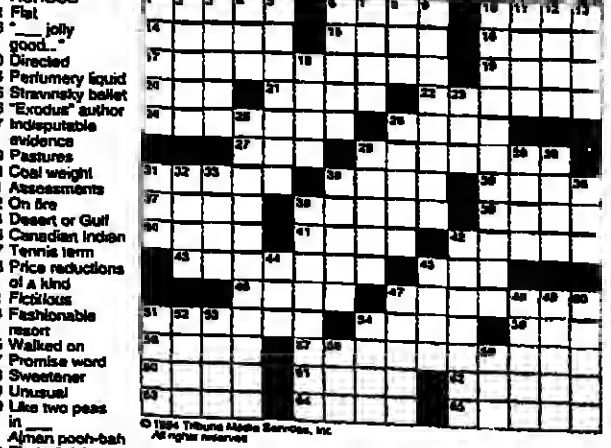
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Put financial affairs aside for now and get out, have yourself a ball with close friends and relieve the tension and stress you are under.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Listen to suggestions of those who live with you since your judgment is not very good today. Act with care and be happy with your loved ones.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

THE Daily Crossword

by Gerald R. Ferguson

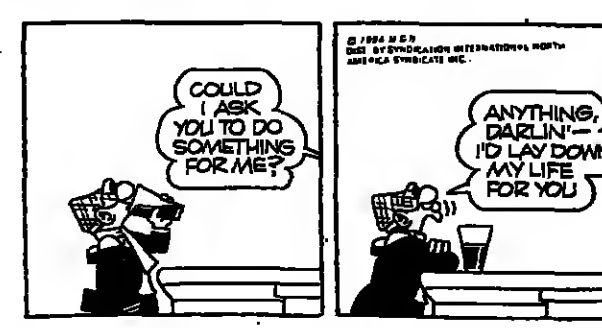


ACROSS
1. jolly
6. good
10. directed
14. Perfumery liquid
15. Stravinsky ballet
16. "Ecotour" author
17. Indisputable
18. Evidence
19. Features
20. Coal weight
21. Measurements
22. On fire
23. Desert or Gulf
24. Canadian Indian
27. Tennis term
28. Price reductions
29. A kind
31. Fictitious
34. Fashionable
35. Walked on
37. Promise word
38. Sweetener
39. Unusual
40. Lure two peas
41. Amino acid
42. Cholesterol
43. Orthopedic
44. Tail
46. Puffer Nolen
47. Rages
51. "Seven Against"
54. Vehicle
55. After expenses
56. African mammal
57. Gun
60. Blasting cheers
61. Rainbow
62. I.C. giver
63. Without
64. The Big
65. Unyielding
66. Put of O.E.F.
68. Cui
8. Entrance
9. U. of Michigan
10. Fast track
11. Zone
12. Mexican general
13. Abstract being
18. Unusual
23. Arthur of TV
25. Wide-bored
26. Tree
28. Unyielding
29. Put of O.E.F.
30. Cui
31. Youth
32. Foxes
33. Slightly
34. Light measure
35. Poor mark
36. Name of Ethiopia
37. Name of Ethiopia
38. Strands
39. Libel
40. Libel
41. Sch. subj.
42. Name of Ethiopia
43. Strands
44. Libel
45. Sch. subj.
47. Dress up
48. Name of Ethiopia
49. Baseball name
50. those
51. Ping results
52. Native dance
53. Baseball name
54. Name of Ethiopia
55. Name of Ethiopia
56. Name of Ethiopia

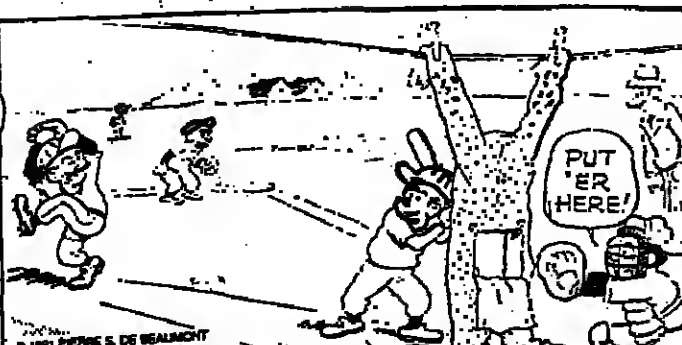
Peanuts

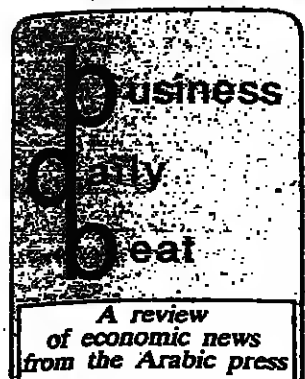


Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff





Dairy producers want to raise prices

Having failed to convince the concerned authorities of the need to increase prices, seven dairy product companies pleaded with the prime minister to hear their complaints. Airing their case in a newspaper advertisement, they said the situation reached a very delicate stage which threatens the survival of the companies. "We request your excellency to give due attention to our cause and exercise fairness to avoid bankruptcy and closure and throwing our workers to the ranks of the unemployed," the companies said. The ad was signed by the Jordan Dairy Company, the Danish Dairy Company and the companies of Al Diel, Al Raie, Al Mouroni, Masoud and Hammoudah and Saad (Al Aswak).

Awad Al Tal, secretary-general of the Ministry of Transport, wants the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) to give a bigger share of oil transport to the Jordanian-Iraqi Land Transport Company (JILTC). Mr. Tal, who is chairman of board of directors, said JILTC was among the largest oil transport companies in the region as it had a fleet of 520 trucks and over 800 employees. The MEMR will soon be floating a tender to transport oil to Jordan in 1995 and stiff competition is expected from many companies to win the tender (Al Aswak).

According to a study analysing the industrial sector, 42 public shareholding companies had JD 1.35 billion in total assets in 1993, 7.8 per cent above the 1992 figure. Net profit of the 42 industrial companies amounted to JD42.2 million, nearly 40 per cent less than the JD 70 million net profit for 1992. The industrial sector had a debt percentage of 53 per cent (Al Aswak).

A merchant was taken in a fancy car to the polling centre to vote for a candidate for the Chamber of Commerce. After casting his vote he could not find anybody to take him back home...not even a taxi (Sawt Al Shaab).

A candidate to the Chamber of Commerce gave his expensive worry beads to a supporter who was admiring them. The gift was given, of course, before the merchant cast his vote (Sawt Al Shaab).

The Ministry of Supply is ready to exchange a coupon of one kilogramme of powdered milk for a coupon of two kilograms of sugar (Sawt Al Shaab).

What has been published about a free zone in Irbid is totally untrue and there are no studies being conducted in this regard, an official source said. He said setting up of free zones requires intensive studies and long time. He added that the most suitable location for a free zone is usually close to a seaport (Al Dustour).

The founding committee of Al Sharq Investment Projects Company has invited the shareholders to a general assembly meeting on Dec. 15. The company floated 2,250,000 shares to public subscription and received applications from 551 investors for 4,213,660 shares, 1.87 times the offered equity. According to the companies' law, each investor was allocated 53.39 per cent of his/her subscription (Al Ra'i).

The Ministry of Planning has set up a unit to coordinate foreign aid in an effort to better manage and follow up on such assistance (Al Dustour).

Offset conference generates new projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An international offset conference in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has ended with announcements of plans to set up six more projects under deals covering the defence sector. The multi-million-dollar projects were made by the U.S. companies Sikorsky Aircraft, Westinghouse Electric and McDonnell Douglas. Chase Manhattan Bank also announced it would press ahead with plans to create a one-billion-dollar company to support offset deals. Sikorsky Aircraft, a division of United Technologies Corp., and Battelle Memorial Institute announced the formation of a pre-offset joint venture to help bring in foreign technology to the Emirates.

The venture, the Gulf Technology Institute, would provide scientific, technical and managerial expertise to public and private institutions. "Services will cover fields such as public health, pharmaceuticals, environment, water and agriculture, education and research and petrochemical industries. We expect to finalise negotiations with our local partners by early 1995," a spokesman for the joint venture said. Three other projects covering small equipment, printing and chemicals were also announced by McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems.

Westinghouse, under its military deal with the UAE, said it was setting up a UAE company called Westinghouse Gulf in a joint venture with the Abu Dhabi-based Western Group. The new venture will provide services in broadcasting, refrigeration, energy, power supplies and environmental systems. More than 300 delegates attended the two-day conference, the first of its kind in the Gulf. Earlier, UAE offset chief Amia Badruddin said his group was considering over 600 offset and pre-offset projects.

"Not all companies like to announce projects," he told reporters. "Some, for fear of competitors and some for their own personal reasons. In addition to today's and yesterday's deals, there are 18 projects whose owners chose not to speak about."

Offset programmes, under which exporters undertake to reinvest part of the deal in the importing country, were introduced in the UAE a few years ago as part of its attempts to attract technology and lessen reliance on oil. Such programmes are so far limited to defence deals but the UAE is considering joining Saudi Arabia in extending them to the civilian sector.

On the first day of the conference, the French air industries giant, Aerospatiale, announced plans to set up a joint aircraft maintenance centre in Abu Dhabi with the Gulf Aircraft Maintenance Company. Two other U.S. firms said they had signed deals to set up a shipyard and a medical services centre.

The French Giat Industries have already started work on offset projects it undertook to carry out in the Emirates under their last year's multi-billion-dollar deal that involved the supply of 436 Leclerc battle tanks.

"We are studying 30 projects, 10 of which are in an advanced stage," the semi-official Emirates News quoted Giat offset chief Jean-Louis Thaumiaux, as saying. "They cover iron, mechanical, pharmaceutical and service industries."

Asian airlines may face profit squeeze with competition

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Airlines in Asia could face a profit squeeze as more external carriers emerging from years of economic woes jockey for a share of the region's huge market potential, a senior U.S. banker said. "The keynote over the next couple of years in Asia is competition from external sources," said Thomas Gallagher, senior vice-president of New York-based Chase Manhattan Bank.

Mr. Gallagher, whose responsibilities include corporate finance for the aerospace industries, said Asian routes were becoming increasingly important to non-Asian carriers to sustain their recovery. "This is going to set new competition standards in Asia that may not be good in the short run for profits. This also means that the Asian markets that are relatively insulated can no longer be so," Mr. Gallagher told AFP after a closed-door aviation meeting in Singapore.

Most major Asian airlines are beginning to report profits after going through a rough patch due to the global aviation slump, analysts say. They say the Asian carriers are now expecting to cash in on improving passenger levels in regional air traffic on the back of rapid economic growth.

Mr. Gallagher said U.S. airlines, which appeared to be making profits after a long red-ink streak, were expected to increase their presence in the Asian market.

He estimated operating income of the nine major U.S. airlines for 1994 to be around \$3.5 billion, higher than the \$900 million last year.

U.S. stock brokerage Salomon Brothers said in a recent report that for the six months to June 1994, major U.S. airlines recorded a net loss of \$380.7 million compared with a net loss of \$1.1 billion for the previous corresponding period.

Salomon Brothers expects the U.S. airline industry to return to profitability in 1994.

2.8m U.S. jobs depend on Asia exports

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Almost 2.8 million U.S. jobs depend on exports to Asia, and the region accounted for more than a sixth of new jobs created in the United States in the past four years, according to a report published here. California heads the jobs table, with 692,000 jobs in the state dependent on exports to Asia in 1993 out of a

total of almost 2.8 million, or one in every 50 U.S. workers, according to the report by Washington-based research institute the Heritage Foundation. Washington state, like California on the country's Pacific coast and thus geographically nearer to Asia, had 359,700 jobs dependent on exports to the region in 1993, said the study.

Texas was in third place with 206,900 jobs, helped by a twinning arrangement with the Chinese province of Shandong, followed by New York with 154,100 and Louisiana with 106,640.

The trend is likely to continue, the Heritage Foundation said, as U.S. companies actively pursue new business in emerging markets such as China and Vietnam.

London Exchange Rates

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	Canadian dollar
1.3834/44	Deutschemark
1.5798/08	Dutch guilders
1.7696/06	Swiss francs
1.3386/96	Belgian francs
32.48/52	French francs
5.4208/58	Italian lire
1631.02/0	Japanese yen
100.25/35	Swedish crowns
7.5225/25	Norwegian crowns
6.8839/80	Danish crowns
6.1860/10	
11.5384/94	
One sterling	
One ounce of gold	\$375.70/376.10

Jordan Times Markets

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.93	6.12	6.56	7.06
Sterling Pound	5.93	6.25	6.75	7.25
Deutsche Mark	5.12	5.12	5.25	5.50
Swiss Franc	5.81	4.00	4.18	4.56
French Franc	5.31	5.56	5.75	6.18
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.18	2.31	2.56
European Currency Unit	5.88	6.00	6.18	6.75

Previous Metals	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	376.40	7.55	Silver	4.64	0.105

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7010	0.7030
Sterling Pound	1.0970	1.1025
Deutsche Mark	0.4466	0.4483
Swiss Franc	0.5278	0.5304
French Franc	0.1300	0.1307
Japanese Yen	0.6994	0.7029
Dutch Guilder	0.3988	0.4008
Swedish Krona	0.0433	0.0435
Italian Lira	0.0433	0.0435
Belgian Franc	0.0433	0.0435

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8430	1.8600
Lebanese Lira	0.041355	0.042865
Saudi Riyal	0.1858	0.1878
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3050	2.3630
Qatari Riyal	0.1913	0.1927
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.8050	1.8220
UAE Dirham	0.1903	0.1912
Greek Drachma	0.2685	0.3185
Cypriot Pound	1.4020	1.5115

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Barcelona, PSG to meet in Champions League quarterfinals

PARIS (Agencies) — Paris St. Germain retained their Champions League 100 per cent record with a 4-1 victory in their final group match against Spartak Moscow Wednesday.

Paris made it six wins out of six in Europe, booking a quarter-final tie against Barcelona, whose 1-1 draw against IFK Gothenburg was enough to earn them a place in the last eight from Group A.

George Weah scored twice to bring his tally to six in as many games. The 28-year-old attacker put Paris 1-0 up in the 27th minute.

Spartak's defence was under siege from the start and broke down when Daniel Bravo's through ball found Davis Ginola.

The striker who returned at the end of last month against Bayern Munich after a groin strain put Weah clear on the left to blast a 20-yard drive into the top right hand corner.

Paris, who have scored in every home game this season, went further ahead with a simply tap-in from Ginola after 42 minutes when Antoine Kombouare's cross found him unmarked 15 yards out.

Weah, who was substituted after 70 minutes, scored his sixth goal and put Paris 3-0 ahead seven minutes after half time. Weah hurt into the box and beat two defenders before rounding the keeper in an outstanding display of individual skill.

Five minutes later Onopko missed a penalty for Spartak when his spot kick hit the bar.

Brazilian striker Rai, the team's leading league scorer, put Paris 4-0 up in the 59th minute when he turned in the box and shot into the corner from 10 yards.

Paris relaxed on their lead

and Spartak blushes were saved by Rodionov, who pulled one back after 67 minutes.

Ten minutes from time, Bernard Allon, who came in for Weah, rattled the bar with a header.

In Barcelona Jose Maria Bakero scored on a header in the 82nd minute to help Barcelona to a 1-1 draw with IFK Gothenburg, allowing the four-time Spanish League champions to advance with the Swedish side to the quarter-finals of the champions league.

Barcelona needed at least a draw to advance. Gothenburg finished first in Group A and was already assured of moving on.

Barcelona needed at least a draw to advance. Gothenburg finished first in Group A and was already assured of moving on.

Bakero scored on a sharp-angle from eight metres that sailed over the head of Gothenburg goalie Thomas Ravelli and into the far corner of the net.

Gothenburg's Stefan Rehn scored a meaningless goal in the 89th minute to make it 1-1 when he picked up a loose ball in a scramble in front of the net and hammered it home from six metres.

Rehn's goal didn't change the fact that both clubs moved on in Europe's most important club competition.

Both teams opened the match before 75,000 at Camp Nou Stadium with clear scoring chances in the first two minutes — Brazilian Romario for Barcelona and Stefan Pettersson for Gothenburg.

The Spaniards carried the play in the first half and had the better scoring chances. Barcelona's best scoring chance in the second half — prior to Bakero's decisive goal — came 20 minutes into



Manchester United's Simon Davies (right) opens scoring past a Galatasaray player during their Champions League match in Manchester (AFP photo)

the period when Bulgarian Hristo Stoichkov centred a ball through the area that Romario barely failed to reach and direct into an open goal mouth.

In Manchester under-strength Manchester United cruised to a 4-0 victory over Turkish club Galatasaray but failed to make it to the quarter-final of the European Champions Cup.

The Reds wound up level on points with second place Barcelona in the Group A standings but the final positions were decided on the results of the two games played between the two teams.

The game at Old Trafford was a 2-2 tie but Barcelona, a 4-0 winner at Camp Nou, joined Sweden's Gothenburg as Group A qualifiers.

United scored three times in the first 48 minutes to overpower Galatasaray before some 49,000 fans at Old Trafford before adding a fourth near the end.

The England champion, which lost its previous two games to Barcelona and Gothenburg, was forced to face the Turks without even regular stars.

Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, wingers Ryan Giggs, Lee Sharpe and Ukrainian Andrei Kanchelsky and defender Paul Parker were injured while striker

Mark Hughes and midfielder Paul Ince were suspended.

Meanwhile holders AC Milan secured a place in the quarter-finals of the European Cup when they travelled to Vienna and beat Austria Salzburg with a solitary goal from Daniele Massaro.

On a night of decisive soccer in the final round of Champions' League group matches, the Italian striker found the net after 29 minutes to ensure that the Italian champions kept alive their hopes of a fourth final appearance in six years.

Milan, beaten by Velez Sarsfield of Argentina in the Inter-Continental Club championship last week,

overcame their jet lag with some style.

Their win enabled them to finish as runners-up in Group D behind unbeaten Dutch champions Ajax Amsterdam despite losing two points because of crowd trouble at their earlier meeting with the Austrians in the San Siro.

Milan now meet Benfica, the Group C winners, in a last eight packed with formidable European clubs next march.

Bayern Munich, like Ajax three times winner of the trophy in the 1970s qualified with a convincing 4-1 win in the Ukraine against Dynamo Kiev.

Scorers:

Hajduk — Stipe Andrijašević (48th)

Steuau — Adrian Ilie (11th, 32nd), Marius Lacatus (25th), Constantin Gîlcă (90th).

Attendance: 15,000

* In Brussels: Anderlecht (Belgium) 1 Benfica (Portugal) 1 (0-0).

Scorers:

Anderlecht — Graeme Rutjes (49th minute).

Benfica — Silva Edilson (83rd).

Attendance: 22,000.

Group D

* In Amsterdam: Ajax Amsterdam (Netherlands) 2 AEK Athens (Greece) 0 (1-0).

Scorers: Tarik Onidja (7th, 78th).

* In Vienna: Austria Salzburg, (Austria) 0 AC Milan (Italy) 1 (0-1).

Scorers: Daniele Massaro (29th).

Attendance: 47,500.

Champions Cup quarter-final ties

Quarter-finals (March 1 and 15)

1. Bayern Munich vs IFK Gothenburg

2. Hajduk Split vs Ajax Amsterdam

3. AC Milan vs Benfica Lisbon

4. Barcelona vs Paris St. Germain.

Semi-finals (April 5 and 19)

Winner of 1 vs Winner of 2

Winner of 3 vs Winner of 4

Final (May 24)



Tarik Onidja of Ajax Amsterdam leaps over AEK Athens goalie Ilias Atmatsidis during their Champions League match in Amsterdam (AFP photo)

Collated results of European Cup Champions' League final group matches.

Group A

* In Manchester: Manchester United (England) 4 Galatasaray (Turkey) 0 (half-time 2-0).

Scorers: Simon Davies (3rd), David Beckham (38th), Roy Keane (49th), Korkmaz Bulent (88th, own goal).

Attendance: 39,220

* In Barcelona: Barcelona (Spain) 1 IFK Gothenburg (Sweden) 1 (0-0)

Scorers:

Barcelona — Jose Bakero (81st)

Gothenburg — Stefan Rehn (88th)

Attendance: 75,200.

Group B

* In Paris: Paris St. Germain (France) 4 Spartak Moscow (Russia) 1 (2-0).

Scorers:

Paris St. Germain — George Weah (28th, 52nd), David Ginola (42nd), Rai (59th).

Spartak — Sergei Rodionov (67th).

Attendance: 31,561.

* In Kiev: Dynamo Kiev (Ukraine) 1 Bayern Munich (Germany) 4 (1-1)

Dynamo Kiev — Andrei Shevchenko (38th).

Bayern Munich — Christian Nerlinger (45th), Jean-Pierre Papin (56th, 82th), Mehmet Schol (87th).

Attendance: 60,000

Group C

* In Split: Hajduk Split (Croatia) 1 Steaua Bucharest 4 (0-3)

Seizinger fastest in downhill practice

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta (R) — Downhill ace Katja Seizinger of Germany warmed up for the World Cup race by posting the fastest time over a difficult, humpy course on Thursday in the final women's downhill practice.

The reigning World Cup and Olympic champion was timed in one minute 40.44 seconds, well ahead of Switzerland's Heidi Zeller-Bachler who clocked 1:41.36.

Anita Wachter of Austria was third fastest in 1:41.45.

Seizinger, who finished second in the downhill here

two years ago, said: "It's a good course, a demanding course."

She added the course was humpy and that Thursday's dull light tended to make it appear flattened out.

"It's more difficult than it was two years ago and calls for greater technical skills," she said of the 2,639-metre long course which falls 707 metres.

The temperature at the start of the training run was about 10 Celsius, but it dropped to about -18 by the time the 64 skiers had completed

their runs. A second training run was cancelled because of the late hour and drop in temperature.

Kate Pace, the top Canadian downhill, did not ski on Thursday after hurting her back in a crash Wednesday and is unlikely to compete this weekend.

When American Picabo Street heard about pace, she burst into tears. The Olympic silver medalist crashed in Colorado last week and said she empathised with her Canadian rival.

Street was eighth in the training run in 1:42.01.

Brazil produces bewildering competition

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil has produced yet another in its unique line of bewildering soccer competitions.

The 1995 Rio De Janeiro Championship has just been unveiled to a perplexed public.

True to form, it features 34 teams, 30 of them minor semi-professional outfits with only a handful of supporters each, and a format that is likely once again to have fans scratching their heads in incomprehension.

The four major clubs are already busy working out how much money they expect to lose, while critics are pouring scorn on the competition.

"First it was 16 teams, then it was 24. Last week it swelled to 32. Now it's 34. Unmistakably," a sarcastic column in O Globo newspaper said.

"The federations organise championships that lose money and the clubs pay the bill," said Antonio Soares Calçada, president of Vasco Da Gama, who have won the tournament for the last three years.

"To put together the team

that the fans demand needs money and the current format is not profitable," Fluminense president Amaldo Santiago said.

Unlike other major soccer nations, Brazil devotes half its season to regional championships, the ones in Rio De Janeiro and Sao Paulo being the most prominent. The national championship lasts just four months.

But even in Rio there are only four major teams — Vasco, Botafogo, Flamengo and Fluminense.

Under the rules of the 1995 competition, there will be just four important matches in the first 14 dates — two meetings between Flamengo and Fluminense and two between Vasco Da Gama and Botafogo.

The formula is immensely complicated, involving two groups each divided into sub-groups in the first stage and with each sub-group divided into two phases, to whittle the teams down to eight and then the four who will take part in the final round.

The big four have announced they will meet

and try to persuade the Rio De Janeiro federation to change the competition.

But they are keen to avoid a repeat of last year's war during which Flamengo, Fluminense and Botafogo threatened to form a break-away league.

If the formula stays untouched, there will be more head-scratching for the fans, who have just witnessed a national championship which used one of the most mind-bogglingly complex formats in soccer history.

A first stage consisting of four groups of six saw all 24 teams go through to a second stage, in which the teams were divided into three groups, two of which were then split into two phases. All this eventually produced eight quarter-finalists.

Brazilian soccer directors have an age-old fear of the traditional league format, fearing that if one team opens up a large lead early on, fans of the other teams will lose interest.

Consequently they have made an art form out of organising formats which give as many chances as possible to as many teams as possible to qualify for the final stage.

NBA ROUNDUP

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Phoenix and Washington, prevented from playing their National Basketball Association game Tuesday because of water condensation on the court, will try again April 6.

Charles Barkley and the Suns were not scheduled to play again in the U.S. capital but were forced into a late-season return when unseasonably warm temperatures and an ice rink beneath the court combined to make the floor wet.

Water vapor from the air defied the efforts of workers to scrub the court clean.

The new date means the hometown Bullets will play three times in as many days, with a game at Indiana April 5, then a home match against the Suns before an April 7 home date against Charlotte.

The game comes during what was the longest break in the Phoenix season, a four-day gameless span. Now the Suns will play at Golden State April 4, visit Washington and play again April 9 in Portland.

In New York, an out-of-court settlement has been reached between two National Basketball Association players and a man who said he was attacked by them after hurling a snowball at their car.

Kevin Casavant had filed a

million-dollar lawsuit against Miami's Billy Owens and Chris Smith of Minnesota for the 1991 incident. No terms of the deal were disclosed.

In Cleveland, Cleveland Cavaliers general manager Wayne Embry has a problem with a new shoe contract featuring National Basketball Association "bad boy" Dennis Rodman.

The advertisement shows Santa Claus reminding Rodman how bad he has been this year, through such means as skipping practice and leading the league in fouls and ejections.

But Rodman received a gift from Father Christmas, a new pair of sneakers, because he led the league in rebounds.

"What kind of message is that?" Embry said. "We're offended by this both as a basketball man and as an African-American. If you bow Santa Claus is going to operate. I don't want my four-year-old daughter to believe in Santa."

Thursday's games

Phoenix 133, New Jersey 110

Houston 101, Charlotte 95

Washington, 124, Dallas 121

OT

Utah 117, San Antonio 111

2OT

Sacramento 103, Seattle 91

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Jansher retains Pakistan Open

KARACHI (R) — Pakistan's world number one Jansher Khan clinched his fourth Pakistan Open squash title Friday with a thrilling five-game win over England's Peter Marshall. Third seed Marshall, ranked second in the world, fully tested Jansher, before the Pakistani eventually won 14-15, 15-14, 15-10, 9-15, 15-6.

3 out of round-the-world race

CAPE TOWN (AP) — A grueling round-the-world yacht race has conquered three more sailors, BOC challenge officials said Friday. Italian Simone Bianchetti, competing for the first time in the BOC challenge solo race, withdrew after returning to Cape Town for a second time Friday in remedy keel problems aboard his Town of Cervia. Floyd Romack of the United States, also a first-time competitor, was disqualified when he arrived in Cape Town on Thursday from Charleston, South Carolina after spending 82 days at sea on the first leg of the race. Rules state that competitors must complete a leg within 30 days after the arrival time of the first boat in their class. South African

Maradona quits as coach

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Diego Maradona, his team in danger of being relegated to the second division, resigned as coach of the Argentine soccer club Deportivo Mandu, citing problems with the team president. Maradona, speaking at a news conference, said club president Roberto Cruz came to the dressing room after last Saturday's game and "said things he should not have said." Maradona did not elaborate. Maradona, 34, is banned from playing by FIFA, world soccer's governing body.

Lawsuit possible in Gerulaitis death

NEW YORK (AFP) — The mother of tennis star Vitas Gerulaitis is seeking permission to inspect the site where her son died of carbon monoxide poisoning as a possible prelude to a lawsuit. Gerulaitis was found dead in a poolside cottage in Southampton, Long Island, on September 18. He was 40 years old. Investigators believe his death was caused by a faulty gas heater. His mother, Aldona Gerulaitis, filed papers in a Manhattan court seeking to inspect the premises to preserve evidence and discover whether to sue anyone.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
TAMARA HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠AJ108643 ♠Void ♠AKJ9 ♠83
- The bidding has proceeded:
- South West North East
- 1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
- What do you bid now?
- Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠K76 ♠A98 ♠63 ♠KQ782
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
- 2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
- What do you bid now?
- Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠KJ9 ♠Q72 ♠A83 ♠KQ107
- The bidding has proceeded:
- South West North East
- 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
- What do you bid now?
- Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠AK983 ♠K72 ♠A8 ♠985
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
- 2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
- What do you bid now?
- Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠AK983 ♠K72 ♠A8 ♠985
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
- 2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
- What do you bid now?
- Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠KJ9 ♠Q72 ♠A83 ♠KQ107
- The bidding has proceeded:
- South West North East
- 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
- What do you bid now?

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Grozny braces for imminent invasion as Yeltsin orders disarming

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin Friday ordered the disarming, by all available means, of illegally-formed armed groups in Chechnya, the Kremlin said.

A presidential decree called for a clamp down on armed groups in the rebel republic and in the neighbouring republics of Ingushetia and Northern Ossetia, a spokesman said.

Meanwhile, Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev left Moscow also Friday for north Caucasus, where Russia has massed troops around Chechnya province, Itar-Tass said. It gave no details of his plans.

Mr. Grachev met separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on Tuesday in north Caucasus and the two men agreed not to use force to end the crisis in Chechnya. But the Kremlin has since toughened its stance and Chechnya fears intervention by Russian troops.

However, pro-reformist members of parliament savaged President Yeltsin for his hardline policy in Chechnya, saying he risked

losing the support of the people and threatening to call for his impeachment.

One member of parliament told Interfax news agency that the armed and special Russian forces massed on the western border of Chechnya would almost certainly be ordered to attack.

Nine normally pro-Yeltsin members of the Duma, the parliament's lower house, sent a message to the president saying the blood of an invasion would be on his hands.

"The Russian government will be transformed from a democratic regime into a police regime," the statement said. Mr. Yeltsin "will lose the support of millions of Russian citizens," it added.

The Duma defence committee chairman, Sergei Yushkevich, said he and other deputies would launch an impeachment drive if Mr. Yeltsin ordered military action to solve the Chechen crisis.

Mr. Yushkevich accused Mr. Yeltsin of "massive extermination of citizens of the Russian Federation."

Russia does not recognise

Chechev's 1991 declaration of independence.

Also Friday, the main opposition force in Chechnya said it would resume combat action to topple separatist President Dzhokhar Dudayev next Monday, Itar-Tass reported.

It quoted an announcement by a spokesman for the opposition provisional council. The announcement followed a statement earlier on Friday that its fighters should be ready for battle by Tuesday.

"The headquarters of the provisional council's armed forces has announced that it will resume military actions against Dudayev's regime on December 12," Tass said.

The Moscow-backed opposition was defeated by Geo. Dudayev's troops in a key battle late last month and the council is saying that the Kremlin is dragging its feet over sending in forces.

Meanwhile, the Chechen authorities in Grozny ordered schools closed and residents frantically built fortifications amid rumours of an imminent assault by Russian troops on the capital of the breakaway republic.



FAREWELL: Their Majesties King Royal Highness Prince Claus of the Netherlands and Queen Noor Thursday bid adieu at the end of the queen's 3-day visit to Jordan to Her Majesty Queen Beatrix and His Majesty King Baudouin (Petra photo)

Europeans 'cautiously' welcome U.S. offer to send troops to Bosnia

ESSEN, Germany (AP) — Having finally gotten an American pledge of military aid in Bosnia, European leaders on Friday welcomed the offer to help evacuate stranded U.N. peacekeepers, but warned a withdrawal could lead to more civilian casualties.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, hosting the European Union summit, pressed the others for a strong statement on the Bosnian crisis, which has caused extraordinary strains between Washington and its allies.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd sought to minimise trans-Atlantic differences and said U.S. President Clinton's statement showed that the Europeans are now working closely with Washington on Bosnia.

Mr. Hurd said the EU summit would not result in a different policy on Bosnia than Washington holds. "I think we all know we need to work closely with the United States and now we are doing so," he said in an interview with the CNN news network.

At the start of the two-day conference, several leaders praised the American offer to send up to 25,000 soldiers to help implement a U.N. pull-out. But the Europeans also urged caution.

"In principle, this is an encouraging political fact, but I hope that it is not necessary to implement," said Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok.

"I hope to convince the other EU members of the necessity to continue (United Nations) activities because I think they are doing a good job," Mr. Kok said.

In a slap at the French, Mr. Kok joined Prime Ministers Jean-Luc Dehaene of Belgium and Jacques Santer of Luxembourg in appealing for an end to speculation about a

troop withdrawal. France has said a pullout might be unavoidable.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the Danish prime minister, expressed concern that the civilian population would suffer and that the conflict would spread in former Yugoslavia. "There is too little talk about what will happen if the peacekeepers leave," he said upon arrival late Thursday.

In Brussels, Belgium, NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes told the Belgian newspaper Le Soir that any withdrawal would be a "complicated and dangerous operation" taking place in a hostile environment.

"I'm asking myself the question whether a retreat is the best solution," Mr. Claes was quoted as saying in an interview before the U.S. announcement. "Especially since the European nations have the moral duty to think about their responsibilities in the Balkans in the short and medium term."

The Bosnia crisis took centre stage at the EU summit after President Clinton's unexpected pledge of U.S. troops Thursday. German Chancellor Kohl agreed to have the leaders discuss the issue over lunch, and foreign ministers had it on their evening agenda.

Until now, the United States has refused to send ground troops to Bosnia — a sore point with Britain, France and other allies, which have sent thousands of troops to protect the besieged civilian population.

Washington's refusal to lend support has led to a rift in the 16-Nation North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. All EU nations except central Ireland belong to the military alliance.

France, which has the most troops in Bosnia, has some of the harshest criticism for the

United States and has said Washington offers only advice while others have soldiers on the firing line.

Jonathan Eyal of the Royal United Services Institute in London suggested Washington's promise of troops was made partly "because it was stung by accusations that it was good at offering advice, but not troops."

With Mr. Clinton's unexpected move, the tough words may be muted at the summit in this Ruhr valley industrial city.

In Paris, the French foreign ministry welcomed as "positive" the American announcement.

"This goes in the direction we hoped because the contributions of our allies will be useful in the event of a decision to withdraw," said ministry spokeswoman Catherine Colonna.

The promise of troops marked another shift in Clinton administration policy on Bosnia. Last week, Washington swung to the viewpoint of other NATO allies that diplomacy, not force, was the best way to deal with the war.

NATO military strategists have been drawing up contingency plans in case of an evacuation. Some 20,000 to 40,000 troops would be needed, with about half expected from the United States.

Preparing for withdrawal has become a priority because the Bosnian Serbs have been holding peacekeepers hostage, attacking U.N.-declared safe areas and blocking food and medical supplies.

France has the most peacekeepers on the ground, some 4,500. Other EU nations taking part in the U.N. mission include: Britain, with about 3,500 peacekeepers; Belgium, 1,000; the Netherlands, 1,900; and Spain, 1,400.

Mogadishu fighting claims 27

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Inter-clan warfare raging in Medina, a southern Mogadishu district, since Tuesday has left at least 27 people dead and more than 100 wounded, correspondents on the scene said Friday.

Meanwhile five Indian U.N. soldiers were hurt, including two seriously, overnight in the explosion of a mortar shell inside their camp at Mogadishu airport, which borders the Medina district, the Indian commander of the U.N. operation in Somalia said.

The correspondents visited Medina Friday during a lull in violent battles in the pocket, which is outside the control of warlord Mohammed Farah Aidede whose supporters control the rest of the south of the lawless capital.

U.N. spokesmen said earlier U.N. troops had not been involved in the fighting.

Witnesses said the fighting pitted the Abgal and the Murusade, two rival factions of the Hawiye clan. It was reportedly sparked by the defection of one faction leader from the camp of self-styled "interim president" Ali Mahdi, who rules northern Mogadishu, to General Aidede.

The flare-up of fighting in Somalia comes as the 15,000 U.N. troops here withdraw prior to a March 31 deadline following the failure of Gens. Aidede and Ali Mahdi to agree on a government of national unity.

First Ulster talks adjourn

BELFAST (AFP) — The first official peace talks in 25 years between the British government and the Sinn Féin political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) adjourned after three-and-a-half hours Friday until December 19.

"We made a beginning," said Sinn Féin chief negotiator Martin McGuinness.

The talks are to resume here four days after the government meets on Dec. 15 with representatives of the other side of the dispute, the loyalist militias.

"This is an historic opportunity which needs to be built upon," said Mr. McGuinness, the 44-year-old former IRA man who led the Sinn Féin team.

"We have told the representatives of the British government that it is now time to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor."

In its statement to the government side, read afterward to the press, Sinn Féin spoke of its "serious attempt to engage meaningfully and authoritatively with your government..."

Norway will not extradite Palestinian

OSLO (R) — A Norwegian court on Friday rejected a German request for the extradition of a stateless woman arrested in connection with the 1977 hijacking of a Lufthansa airliner.

The Oslo probate court ordered the release of Souhaila Sami Andrawes, arrested in Norway on Oct. 13 at the request of German police.

Ms. Andrawes, 41, who has lived in Oslo for three years, is the only survivor of four hijackers who forced the Lufthansa plane to land in Somalia, demanding the release of 11 urban guerrillas held in West Germany and two Palestinians. The five-day drama ended when West German commandos stormed the aircraft and freed the 86 passengers.

"Conditions for extraditing her were not there. She will not be extradited," Brit Lund, a court official, told Reuters.

The court ruling was made as Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres arrived in Oslo to receive the Nobel Prize and hold a summit with fellow laureate PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

Italy's Di Pietro to tie the knot

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — After three years in the limelight as an anti-corruption crusader, Judge Antonio Di Pietro plans to take some time for himself and get married, colleagues said.

Judge Di Pietro, 44, who resigned Tuesday, plans to marry the woman he has been living with for the past 10 years, Susanna Mazzoleni. They have two children. The Milan magistrate who became a national hero with his Clean Hands corruption probe has yet to formalise his resignation by sending a letter to a judicial oversight panel as required. He has more than two months of vacation accrued, and with honeymoon time and other compensatory time for his resignation, he will remain on the government payroll for almost four months. Judge Di Pietro, nicknamed "the little judge" because of his rural upbringing and previous jobs as a labourer and policeman, is divorced from his first wife. They have one son.

Charles, Diana eligible for 'quickie divorce'

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles and Princess Diana, whose "fairytale" marriage dissolved in bitter recrimination, Friday became eligible for a "quickie" mutually agreed divorce. But two years to the day after their separation shocked Britain, the royal couple appear in no hurry to make the split final — even if they can now do so without a messy court hearing. Prince Charles, who admitted adultery in a controversial television documentary, told his authorised biographer that he had no plans to divorce. His beloved grandmother, the 94-year-old Queen Mother, is also opposed to divorce and he may wish to spare her the distress of witnessing a permanent parting. Princess Diana, shaken by allegations she had an affair with dashing cavalry officer James Hewitt, fears that if she makes the first move, she could lose her two young sons, Prince William, 12, and Prince Harry, 10, and see her popularity plummet. Andrew Morton, author of two international best-sellers about Princess Diana, predicts that the couple will not divorce for at least another year.

Japanese women marry later, work harder, have fewer children

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese women marry late, have few children, and are the hardest workers in the world's major industrialised nations, according to a government white paper released Friday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi, who is also in charge of government policies on women's affairs, reported the findings in the White Paper On Women. According to the report, the average Japanese woman married at the age of 26.1 and had 1.46 children in 1993. In response to a survey question on which family member was responsible for taking care of the children, 68.6 per cent of Japanese said the mother, while only 14.9 per cent said "all family members" shared the duty. In Sweden, the United States and France, more than 50 per cent of respondents cited "all family members."

The Japanese woman's average working week, including time spent on the job and on domestic chores, totalled 74.4 hours, which exceeded the average for men, which reached only 61.7 hours. The paper said women in other industrialised nations spent less time working at home and at their place of employment — 67.8 hours in France, 62.1 hours in the United States, and 59 hours in Britain. The white paper also said the birth rate was declining in Japan because women regard the burden of child-rearing and other domestic duties as increasingly heavy. On Tuesday, the Labour Ministry said that among two-income couples, wives spent three hours and 51 minutes per day on average on domestic chores and child care, while husbands spent only 12 minutes.

Yazdi warns Khamenei critics

NICOSIA (AP) — The head of Iran's judiciary said Friday that critics of the country's spiritual leader could be prosecuted.

"Those who have access to the public through podiums or their pens, must not act and write in negative ways," says Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi.

In a sermon at Tehran University, he said violators "could be prosecuted."

Ayatollah Yazdi said Islamic law forbade criticism of the clergy.

His sermon, broadcast by the state-run Tehran Radio and monitored in Cyprus, was a warning to critics of Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran's theocratic government has named Ayatollah Khamenei as supreme spiritual leader of the world's 100 million Shiite Muslims.

It has identified him as the successor to Grand Ayatollah Ali Araki, who died earlier this month of old age. He was at least 100.

Traditionally, the succession has been a purely religious matter, free of government interference. But by naming Ayatollah Khamenei as the *marja al-ala*, or supreme spiritual leader of the sect, the Tehran establishment is trying to change the rules.

In the past, the supreme leaders of the sect have steered clear of involvement in politics.

But Iran's goal is to fuse political and religious power in a single person to boost its own influence at home and among Shiites worldwide, and to promote its own version of militant Islam.

But Ayatollah Yazdi's comments indicated there was criticism inside Iran of

official efforts to promote Ayatollah Khamenei as the *marja al-ala*. The succession also could be rejected by Shiites in other countries.

Traditionally, the *marja al-ala* has been chosen from the top-ranking clerics, or grand ayatollahs. There are at least five living.

Several senior Iranian clerics have referred to Khamenei as a grand ayatollah since Ayatollah Araki's death. But inside the organised Shiite hierarchy, Ayatollah Khamenei, 55, is regarded as a middle-ranking cleric without the credentials to be supreme leader.

Shiite Muslims comprise about 10 per cent of the world's one billion Muslims.

Elsewhere in his sermon, Ayatollah Yazdi said that Serbs convicted of war crimes could be sent to Iran to live out their prison sentences.

General census starts today

(Continued from page 1)

Yesterday, the department ran advertisements in the Arabic dailies in the form of a reminder asking those who had lost or disposed of the former reminders to use the ads to record the number of persons who were at their home on the evening of Dec. 9.

Census questions go beyond basic demographic information — notably, the census will not only ask for past residents and refugee status, but also date and place of birth of both mother and father.

Ahduallah Abdul Aziz

Zoubi, executive director of the 1994 census, said it is only natural that the government should want these statistics.

"The government has to study migration trends," he said. "It is important in a place like Jordan where the population has increased significantly over short periods of time."

The most important objective of the census, he said, is to establish the number of inhabitants in each governorate so as to facilitate policy-making and planning.

The last census, in 1979, recorded approximately two

million Jordanians. Now, 15 years later, it is estimated that the Kingdom's population has nearly doubled to over four million people.

The census will record all Jordanians, foreigners living in Jordan, all those entering the Kingdom on the evenings of the census as well as Jordanians residing abroad for a 12-month period or less (students, tourists, businessmen).

The census will not be an excuse for a leisurely few days of rest and relaxation. Unlike other countries, said Dr. Zoubi, no one is required to stay at home to facilitate census procedures.

before negotiating the scale of any withdrawal.

Israel has recently said there was no point resuming bilateral talks in Washington unless there was something to talk about.

Haaretz said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had on Tuesday in Damascus tried to persuade Syrian President Hafez Al Assad that every inch of land Israel surrendered should be demilitarised and placed under international control.

Israeli-Syrian talks to resume

(Continued from page 1)

Haaretz noted. Israel and Syria had already agreed that the arrangements must be "balanced" on both sides of the border, which would be drawn up in a peace agreement.

The Hebrew press reported last week that a bid to bring Syrian army officers into the talks between the

ambassadors failed at the last minute in November.

Mr. Rabin has repeatedly called for a secret channel to break the deadlock, but Syria reportedly feared press leaks.

Negotiations have been blocked virtually since they began in October 1991 over Syrian demands for an Israeli promise to return all the strategic plateau while Israel has demanded a commitment for peace with open borders

Israel's reliability as peace partner seriously questioned

By Michael Jansen

ON THURSDAY, after six days of consideration and debate in four cabinet meetings, the Israeli government decided to adhere to the Oslo accord, concluded with the Palestinians, thereby averting the most serious crisis so far faced by regional peace-makers.

According to the Oslo accord Israel would have had to permanently "redeploy" its army "outside populated areas... not later than the eve of elections" for a Palestinian self-governing council.

However, Israeli generals and cabinet ministers now argue that settlers will be at risk from attack by Islamic militants if the troops were withdrawn. Some called for Israel to

make unilateral changes in the Oslo accord, others for its "renegotiation", while the Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, pressed for postponement of this stage "for two or three years."

The Palestinians responded by demanding prompt implementation of the accord while the Egyptian foreign minister, Amr Musa, said failure to abide by it would be "disastrous."

The "doves" in the cabinet, led by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, were forced to trade-off the reaffirmation of Israel's commitment to "redeploy" for a promise not to raise the question of moving or removing any Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories before the interim period of self-rule has ended.

Although such a provision has been written into the Oslo accord, the doves had hoped to remove militant settlers from the most sensitive Palestinian population centres (such as central Hebron) in order to make the army's security task easier.

The cabinet "hawks" led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who sustained a defeat at the hands of the "doves," can now be expected to demand wide powers to ensure the security of settlers in the areas of the West Bank affected by the "redeployment." Among such arrangements would be an entirely new network of roads to be used by settlers only — a sort of apartheid by highway.

It took the efforts of both the "doves" and U.S. secretary of state, Warren Christopher, on his seventh

visit to the region this year, to defeat this attempt by the Israeli military establishment and hawkish politicians to revoke or rewrite the Oslo accord.

These revisionist hawks began their campaign during last Sunday's regular cabinet meeting when military experts reported that such a redeployment would increase the risk of Islamist attacks on Israeli settlers living in the West Bank, citing the fact that 32 Israelis had been killed since Oct. 1.

Mr. Christopher took an unexpectedly firm stand, warning the Israelis against "unilaterally" rewriting the accord or ignoring its provisions, aware that any attempt to do so would invalidate the accord and undermine the entire peace process. However, he somewhat weakened this

stand by stating that Israel could not be expected to pull out its troops if the security of the settlers could not be provided by the Palestinian National Authority.

Thus Mr. Christopher's shuttle mission, meant to secure progress on the Syria-Israel track, became a damage-limitation effort on the PLO-Israel track. At stake was not only the survival of the Oslo accord, the basic document of regional peace-making, but the peace process itself, for without the Palestinians there can be no general Arab-Israeli settlement.

But even Mr. Christopher could not stem the considerable damage done by this week's crisis, a crisis which has consistently been underplayed in the world media. The very fact that

the Israeli cabinet debated whether or not to implement the provisions of a solemn agreement concluded with Israel's major Arab antagonist calls into question Israel's reliability as a peace partner.

Syria and Lebanon, the two countries which have not yet concluded agreements with Israel, will now be very reluctant to take anything on trust and can be expected to demand "full Israeli withdrawal" before conceding anything to Israel in terms of non-belligerency and normalisation. They can also be expected to insist on iron-clad guarantees for any accords they sign with Israel, though it is difficult to see how such guarantees can be provided because the U.S. remains totally committed to Israel and its policy positions.